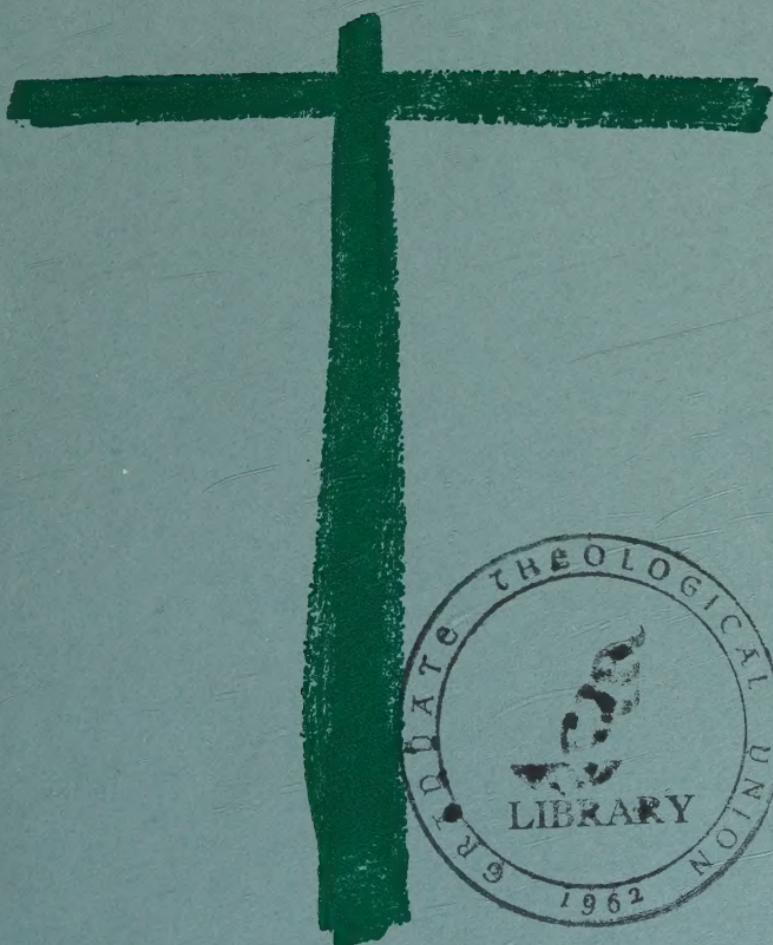


*Dialogue*

# The Franciscan



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APRIL, 1981

# The Society of Saint Francis

Protector of the Society : The Bishop of New York

Minister General : Brother Geoffrey S.S.F.

## THE FIRST ORDER OF THE S.S.F. EUROPEAN PROVINCE

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*Pax et bonum.*

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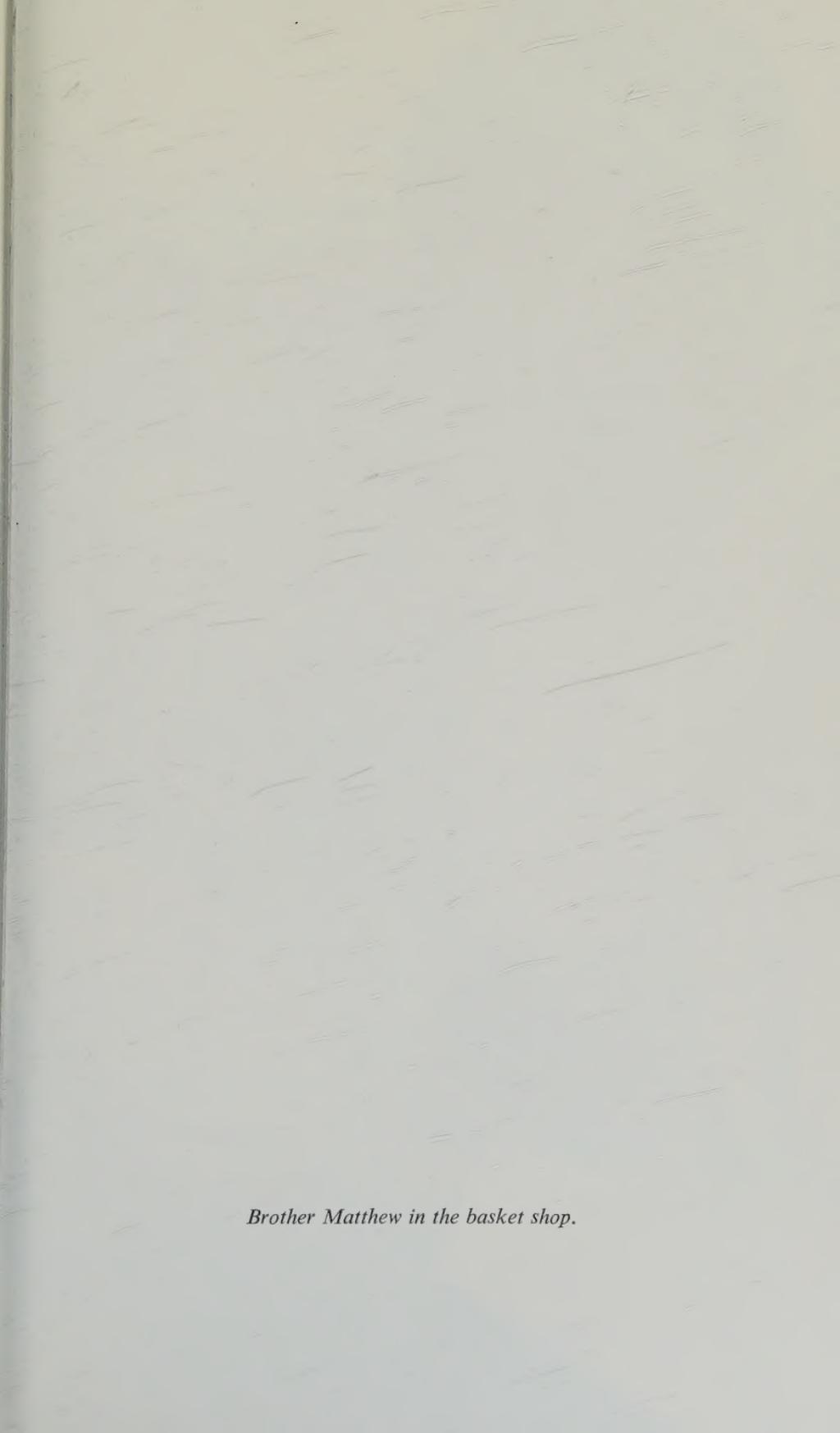
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*Brother Matthew in the basket shop.*



## Dialogue



THE committed Marxist, though often anxious to engage in dialectic with those whose commitment is the antithesis of his own, will rarely engage in dialogue. For dialectic aims at seeking a solution and that can mean conversion, whereas dialogue tries to understand and accommodate, and, for the purist, that is unthinkable.

There are many Christians who see God as a personal possession, and for whom adjustment to accommodate other creeds, or a positive lack of them, is anathema, for they see themselves as in possession of all truth. Yet Christianity is a way of life where giving and receiving is of the essence—which is not to say that it is a watered-down religion: for the cross symbolises absolute commitment. The commitment to which the cross calls us, however, is the commitment to him who is love and to give all for love of him. And he, whose love knows neither breadth, nor depth, nor height, is our archetype; he is leading us, through his Spirit, into all truth. With Paul, we know that we have not yet won the race, we have not yet achieved the totality of truth. God is still revealing himself today, and we are gently, and sometimes not so gently, being led to look again at our dogmas and doctrines and all that we hold dear.

The tension that such heart-searching creates, traumatic though it often is, in the end is what keeps us alive to God and what renews us in our faith and belief.

Until Copernicus, the world believed that its planet was at the heart of things, and even the Sun a rather grand satellite. But the realisation that the contrary was the case was, for the world, a true lesson in humility. Similarly, our spiritual priorities are turned upside down when we realise that our little existence centres in on him who is at the very heart, and from whom radiates not only all that we receive, but all that is.

## The Minister General's Letter

My dear friends,

On 14 February, 1931, four years after the provisional rule had been approved, Brother Douglas, together with Brother Arthur and Brother Kenneth, made their vows to the Bishop of Salisbury. Thus, while it could be said that the work of the Community began in 1921, the Community itself came into being with the taking of these vows in 1931, and so this year 1981 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the European Province of our Society. It is a tremendous joy to us all that Brother Kenneth as a founder brother is still with us today, and he has a most important role for he takes us back to our roots and to our beginnings.

The Society of S. Francis defies all the usual norms of development for whereas most religious orders start with one founder around whom a united community is built and only later may divide, as the O.F.M. did, our Society has grown into a unity from the amalgamation of a collection of small groups. The first link up was between Brother Douglas' Brotherhood and Father Algy and his Brotherhood and then with the Brotherhood of the Holy Cross headed by Father George Potter. Later the Society of S. Francis inherited the rich tradition of the Society of the Divine Compassion through Glasshampton and Plaistow. It was my privilege at Plaistow to help forge this link in 1953 and I was so aware of the committed ministry of those wonderful men who served for sixty years in the East End of London and beyond. Then came the Community of S. Francis, who for so long had been in Hackney and then moved to Compton Durville, to become an integral part of S.S.F. and later our First Order Sisters. Last to join us were our American brothers of the Order of S. Francis who were part of the resurgence of Franciscan life in this century and who after 1967 became the American Province of the Society. All these groups have not been lost by becoming part of the Society of S. Francis. Rather each has made its distinctive contribution to what the Society is today and has enriched it.

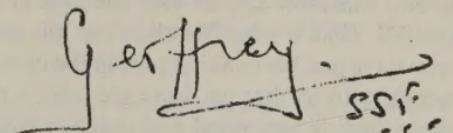
I must also call attention to the special place of Hilfield Friary in the European Province's development. Several times it has changed its name from Flowers Farm, to Batcombe, to Cerne Abbas, and now to Hilfield, but though the name changes the place does not change. It goes back to that first work with the wayfarers and to those three

brothers who made their supreme act of faith in 1931. To some extent it has changed in appearance. New buildings have gone up and others have been re-designed, but the old shape largely remains. Not only does the outward structure remain, but Hilfield has in a wonderful way retained much of the simplicity and the spirit of those early days; long may it continue to do so.

Roots are important, indeed one might say vital. We are what we are because of what has gone before. This does not mean that there can be no changes. The gardener can train the growth of his plants in different ways. He can also prune a plant and cut off leaves or flowers or shoots. But if he pulls up the roots he has nothing left and the plant withers and dies. The only roots the gardener pulls up are those of a weed or a noxious plant. This applies to communities. We need our roots to supply us with our particular charism or life. Certainly we need to prune and adapt but let us beware of pulling up roots and being too drastic. The same applies to brothers. To keep pulling them up and transplanting them does not make for a healthy growth. Our Christian life, and so our Franciscan life, is about commitment—to God and to the people God gives us to care about in our apostolate.

So we thank God for Kenneth whose commitment over fifty years takes us back to our roots. We thank God for Hilfield Friary which has faithfully maintained the life started by Douglas, Kenneth and those early brothers, and we pray for those who minister there now whose responsibility it is to translate that tradition in terms of today's world.

May we all be true to the vocation God is revealing to us.

A handwritten signature in cursive ink, appearing to read "Geoffrey SSMF". The signature is fluid and somewhat stylized, with a horizontal line through the end of the "y".

Minister General.

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In a higher world it is otherwise, but here below to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN.

## Brother Matthew

The picture of Matthew as basket-maker is one by which many of us will remember him, and we may not realise that he spent some time at the house in Cable Street in 1948—49 and was at Plaistow in 1953—56 and at the house in Canterbury in its first days.

Michael Reep Beer was born in 1907 and became a postulant of the Society in 1943 and a novice in 1944. He was professed in 1947 and Life-Professed in 1950. He died at Hilfield in November last, just near the end of the Counselling Conference, so that a large number of brothers were able to be present at his funeral, during which the following address was given.

If one ever reads a biography written within the last decade or two, one is likely to be told, however eminent the person concerned, a great deal about his failings and failures, how awful he was to some and difficult for others, that he was ‘really’ not at all what people thought. I think that anyone who tried to do that with our Brother Matthew would have his work cut out. One is bound to fit to him the words so often on his own lips (as in fact somebody at once did yesterday), ‘He was a good man’. A number of us had a way of using Matthew’s phrases and tone of voice when speaking with other brothers, so that it became a kind of second language. If one was a bit shy of saying something ‘straight’, if one did it in Matthew’s tone of voice, it made all the difference. This was not, I think, to take a rise out of Matthew, but to bring into the situation some of Matthew’s boundless goodwill. One could never say in Matthew’s voice, ‘He was a *bad* man’, or indeed that anything was ‘very bad’. Those phrases had no place in his vocabulary. In fact the phrase of his one most repeated was ‘very good’ or ‘very good, I’m sure’.

Do you remember where that phrase comes in Scripture? Right at the beginning. God saw all that he had made and it was *very good*. Matthew saw all that God made and he saw that it was very good. He was sure about that. We can’t but be aware of other people’s failures and shortcomings and I suppose Matthew wasn’t, but that didn’t seem to count. We are all God’s creatures and everything around us, even if fashioned and used by human means, is part of his creation. Spoiled and marred we may be and the rest of creation too. But basically, it is very good. Matthew saw us with the eyes of God, who sees that his creatures are ‘very good’. That is what Matthew has left to us. Perhaps that is his word to those of us who have just been taking part in the conference—not to be looking so hard at what’s wrong with us that we don’t see what’s right with us. We have to find in ourselves that which is very good and that is what we are trying to help others to find.

Monica Furlong a few years ago issued a book of poems of which the title was, *God’s a good man*. An odd title, perhaps, but what does it mean? If we know what a good man is like, we can know something of what God is like. Didn’t some of the crowd in S. John’s gospel say of Jesus, ‘He is a good man’, even if others weren’t so sure? A good man is God’s way of showing us himself. A good man from out of the treasures of his heart brings forth good things. For that we can be thankful. We might remember, too, that, like Matilda’s aunt in the song Matthew often performed, he ‘kept a strict regard for truth’. I remember once retailing a remark

supposed to have been made by Archbishop Fisher during a visit here. Matthew, grinning, asked, 'Did you hear him say it?'

Yesterday in this chapel when we sang the hymn about the Bread of Life, I found it difficult to get the words out. It wasn't sorrow or sadness, I think. I've been here at other times when that hymn has been sung and whatever one made of the words, they spoke of the glorious hope that lies before us. It was one thing to sing of it in general, another to sing it with one of our brethren in mind. It was one of those times when what one knows, or thinks one knows, becomes wonderfully alive because linked with someone we have known and loved. Matthew has now entered into what God had prepared for him. How vividly that speaks of what God has prepared for us all—but never so vividly but that the one with whom we link it was the one we will remember as above all, the good man, full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith, who looked upon us all and saw that we were very good. That's something for us to be worthy of.

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## Brother Owen

Owen Robert Powell-Evans was born in 1907. He was ordained priest in June 1933 and came to S.S.F. in 1936. He was life-professed in 1942. As founder of S. Francis School, Hooke, and headmaster from 1945 to 1966, he was awarded the M.B.E. in 1967. After his retirement from the school he went to Toynbee Hall and then to Kennington, then to Auckland in 1973 from where he returned after a stroke. He died on 1 January this year at Hilfield.

The following address was given by Brother Anselm, who was his successor at the school, at the funeral.

When you don't know where to begin, it's safest to begin where you are. This is Eucharist, thanksgiving—in Jesus, for Jesus. If one thing was more important for Owen than anything else, that was it. May it be so for us.

He was that very rare thing—a truly simple man. When you met him, you didn't feel that here was a personage, an act. You really met *him*. That is why he was deeply respected, as well as dearly loved.

Life held few complications for him. He could see what was needed, in the same moment it became obvious to him what had to be done—so then, all that remained was to do it. Sometimes people thought they knew other better, more correct ways—and then life might become complicated. Without his intuition, his strength, his compassion, his vision, his impatience with red tape and convention, there would have been no Saint Francis School—and many lives would have been much the poorer.

Even the briefest account can't stop there, because there was always fun. A basic theme of life with Owen was this sharing of enjoyment, jokes, excursions, people, places. Never an aesthete, never an intellectual—his progress was unreflective, God centred, loving, laughing. All we had to do was to keep up with him—or try to.

He wasn't interested in theories, or rules, because he didn't need them. Yet, there was an instinctive mutual recognition, respect, and affection between him and other workers in what is called 'special education'—David Wills, Otto Shaw, Pip Drysdale, Edna Oakeshott and many others.

Many of you find it hard to recognise in that little sketch, the man you knew. For the last six years he grappled with incapacity—and we thank God that apart from stays in hospital and some weeks in a rehabilitation centre which he hated, we were able to have him with us in our houses—in Plaistow, in Birmingham—latterly and at last with a measure of happiness, here at Hilfield.

*Nothing* was ever allowed to come in the way of his pastoral concern for and love of those who relied on him. Only one thing was more important—his catholic and sacramental faith in his Lord, Jesus Christ.

He had never really had time for anything else, when the use of his left side was taken away. That is why inactivity was a heavy cross. We rejoice with him today because he has laid it down, and has entered upon the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Owen was always a great one for reunions. Reunions at the home of Peggy and Anthony Lewis in Greenwich, and then reunions at Toynbee Hall. As we say 'Farewell, Old Man, and rest in peace', we believe that he is now experiencing the best reunion of all—not in London—not even at Hooke—but where in God's time we shall join him too, in the many mansions which our saviour has gone to prepare.

---

## Brother Maurice

Maurice Buchanan-Brown became a novice in 1957, was professed in 1960. He brought with him a military aura and in his early days in the Society he was known as 'the Major'. He was thought of in those days as very disciplined and rather fierce. When he worked in the office someone put on the door a picture postcard of a white tiger! But there was the other side of his character which had a more Franciscan character and was more fundamental; that was his desire to do penance. Penance was the keynote of the early Franciscans, who when asked who they were replied 'We are penitents from Assisi'. Maurice was an elderly man when he joined us, being already sixty years of age. He was a widower and his wife had been a very devout Christian. Looking back on his life Maurice could see many things for which he should be sorry, although in the eyes of the world he was a most respected retired army officer.

So these tendencies were very strong in Maurice when he joined us; discipline and penitence. Both received a severe shock when the world at large developed into the Permissive Society, the Acquisitive Society, which scorned authority. To Maurice sadly, the spirit seemed to be pervading the community to the devaluation of the three vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. He asked for excommunication and for three years went into the wilderness. During this period I met him from time to time when I passed through London and he would unburden himself to me. But at the end of these years he returned to the community.

He worked with Brother Arnold in preparation for and founding the house in Birmingham. He did some parish work in London and also in Birmingham and in both places he made many friends and would return after he had left for special events in these parishes. He lived in the house at Plaistow where he did some pastoral work and from where he went to the London Hospital where he died, after surgery.

With which of the soldiers in the gospel shall I compare him? The centurion whose faith the Lord commended but who was such an upholder of authority? Another who stood faithfully at the cross because it was his duty but had vision to see through the criminal dying on the Cross that this was the Son of God? Or the common soldier who in charity gave a drink to a dying man? In all these one sees something of Brother Maurice—soldier, penitent and friar.

KENNETH S.S.F.

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## Second Order at Stroud

Since our wonderful Dedication Day on 12 July last year, we have been settling down gradually to our normal life of silence and prayer. As some of the buildings were still not finished we had to employ Kevin, our builder, and one of the muddies, as well as the plumber and the electrician, and make use of voluntary unskilled labour within the enclosure until Christmas.

Now we are free to relax a little and enjoy our beautiful surroundings which have been transformed from brown to green by rain after a long drought. Because of our close involvement with the great number of people who helped with our building, every wall, every path, every roof reminds us of the particular people who constructed them. After living without door handles, shelves and cupboards, we appreciate each one of these as we receive them.

We have opened a small guest house where many people have come already for quiet holidays and private retreats. Our gardens and orchards are being established, and at last we have time and space for producing articles for sale: at present mainly mounted icons and wooden holding crosses, but soon we hope to make wooden toys and sandals.

We continue to be very grateful to Franciscan friends throughout the world who contribute to our financial needs. The debt is still large, but we are very pleased to see it diminishing gradually.

## Chronicle

*Brother Anselm writes:*

**EUROPEAN PROVINCE** On 14 February, as reported elsewhere, we celebrated fifty years of vows in S.S.F.

One of the three brothers who were professed on 14 February, 1931, survives—Brother Kenneth—and we all rejoiced with him at the midday eucharist at Hilfield, especially as the word was preached by a very old and dear friend of S.S.F., Bishop John Moorman.

Twenty of the fifty years had passed when I first met Brother Kenneth—we were fellow members of the Church of England Mission in the Hopfields at Paddock Wood, where the friars (Kenneth, Francis and Peter) led a team of students and other friends who lived and laughed and worked among the Londoners for whom hop picking was a holiday with pay. The Mission achieved no more in the way of building up the church of God in East London than did any of the other similar ventures carried on at the time, or so it seemed to us. The more daring (the young were sometimes daring, even then) went so far as to ask questions of a radical kind which cast doubts upon the rightness of imposing ‘religion’ on people in this way, and someone was even heard to use the word ‘medievalist’ to describe our operations.

What were we up to? Looking back, that seems to be the wrong question. How was God using that opportunity? Looking back, it can now be seen that the Spirit was at work in and among us who were seeking to deepen our Christian commitment, and was leading us, not least through our meetings with the mums and dads and kids, to realise a wide variety of personal vocations, and to explore the implications of life in Christ for community—in the first place, the community of the old oast house—later, the community of family, congregation, and (a few of us) community of life under vows.

The Spirit was lovingly, patiently, insistently building the church. He still is, though what he is doing now is hidden from us, just as it was then. We can only be sensitive and alert, and try not to get in the way too much. We shall try, at the ‘Gospel Now’ conference, to be open to his influence as he strives to breathe some of his life into our stumbling and mumbling—and later in the year when all the novices, C.S.F. and S.S.F., gather at Hooke for their conference, our attention will be focussed on ‘Community’ as it is experienced in the power of the Spirit and in the light of the gospel.

Can it be said of the Society of Saint Francis, here is community, complete, achieved? Of course not. We believe that the Spirit is working among us, as we are faithful, and that we have to work too—and that this work is an essential part of our witness to Christ in a world of strife and destruction of community and person. Our sisters and brothers of the Three Orders are scattered over the earth's surface, separated by differences of culture and race as well as by tens of thousands of miles. They are divided also by jealousy and prejudice—to pretend otherwise would be to admit defeat by these destructive powers. The First Order Brothers' and Sisters' Chapters, and the Third Order Interprovincial Chapter, have the task of overcoming these divisions where this can be done in the making of decisions, in right information, in fellowship—but nothing can replace the loving intentions of our own hearts and wills where these are set in the direction of 'building and planting' a relationship of love and regard for the 'other Provinces'.

The jealousy and prejudice alluded to are partly the consequence of distance—bad news travels fast, good news is no news—so the things which tend to divide us within our Province are different. There are many issues upon which Anglicans of the five ecclesiastical provinces in which we live find little common ground—the ordination of women to the priesthood, the rights (or wrongs) of homosexuals, the proposals for covenanting between separated churches, the ways in which we pray together, are some of the hottest potatoes at present. Our brothers and sisters, in honesty and good faith, find themselves on different sides in these matters; and it is disappointing when what should be dialogue in charity begins to sound more like an ominous silence, punctuated by explosions. Differences of conviction are an occasion for the deepening and strengthening of community, as we learn to respect and value what is held by those from whom we differ. We cannot do that without taking the trouble to learn other points of view, and study all the arguments—and be ready to be led by the Spirit 'into all truth'. This truth is seen by many Christians as only partly perceived here and now, as a goal rather than as something 'delivered once for all'; and its attainment as a part of our growing together in community, the building of Christ's body.

The really hard work in all this is done in the actual business of living together in our houses. In that very tangible, down to earth way we can be seen and known as a community in the building, an

instrument of peace, a power in a divided world, a living protest against human brutality, more enduring and therefore more effective than any number of marches or demos, or letters to the press.

At present, I am enjoying a term as a student at an Anglican theological college (Westcott House, Cambridge); and it is my devout hope that no member of S.S.F. will be present at our Shrove Tuesday Revue, for which I now have to go and rehearse!

*Brother Bernard writes:*

**HILFIELD** The Death of Brother Matthew on 28 November and of Brother Owen on New Year's Day is reported elsewhere and we join ourselves with the tribute paid to them. I would only say how much we miss them and thank all those who have written to us. Both died peacefully and without long agonising hanging on, both died in the Lord (and on Feast Days too!) and both are buried in our cemetery here.

Dr. Denise Kelleher, our neighbour and friend, died in February. She had long been a member of the Third Order and was for many years the medical advisor to the community. She had worked in New Guinea and knew many of the brothers in different parts of the world. She was an unfailing and generous friend to the Society and to members of the Home here, who she invited each year to Hountwell. It was very happy that Brother David was here at the time of the funeral and was able to speak of her Christian faith and marvellous courage to the large congregation that came to pay their respects. We shall miss Denise and we send our sympathies to her sister and family.

New Life. We are continually encouraged by the steady flow of aspirants to our Society and ask our friends to pray continually that the Lord will increase us in numbers according to his will. It seems to me that the ball is very much at our feet, with so many requests for help with work and ministry of all kinds; it will be wonderful if the Lord continues to give us men and women able to serve in the Society. It was a great joy that the Minister was here to clothe four more as novices, Steven Tricklebank (Steven), Robert Lloyd (James Peter), Graham Piper (Graham) and Alan Miller (Alan). It was a very happy day and we wish them well. The ranks of the black power will be swelled again when three postulants are brought into choir on 11 March.

Hearty congratulations poured into the Friary for Brother Kenneth on S. Valentine's Day, the anniversary of the first three brothers (of which he was one) taking vows in the Society—14 February, 1931. The Minister General marks the occasion in his letter and in a wonderful letter to Kenneth. The day was honoured by the presence of Bishop John Moorman, who preached at the Eucharist to a crowd of nearly two hundred who just managed to squeeze into the Chapel. He preached a sermon about holy obedience to the will of God and we saw again the courage and faith of those who began our community at the Lord's direction. Those of us who live here know what a special grace rests on this place and are thankful for those who have contributed to the life here over the years. Special love and gratitude go

to Kenneth. He is now 78 and sometimes gets tired, but usually is robust in coping with the deluge of letters which come to him—though the bumper load for this anniversary has proved daunting—and in visiting and preaching from time to time. There were several tributes to him in the press, and lots of phone calls as well as all the visitors, to all of which Kenneth gave himself. I don't ever remember seeing Kenneth so deeply happy and thankful as I did that night when I went up to say good-night to him. Thank you to all who contributed to this memorable day.

**Lent Events.** The weather has brought the snowdrops and aconites out with the daffodils so hard on their track that Easter seemed almost here with Lent only just begun. But we had a large quiet day for confirmation candidates from Sherborne School and a quiet day of preparation for Lent to which over forty came. Samuel is doing a similar day before Holy Week and Anselm will conduct our Holy Week course here. We are fortunate that Canon Murdoch Dahl is coming for a seminar in passiontide on the Atonement, for which some sisters are joining us.

**Summer Plans** proceed apace and especially for the Youth Camp, 7—17 August. Brother Philip Bartholomew (whose first profession came as such a joy at the end of the December retreat and whose frequent visits here from the School, as are Christopher's and Bruce's, are a happy feature of life here) will again be responsible for it. This year our tertiary priest Simon Wilkinson is bringing a largish number from his parish and he and Philip are planning an exciting programme of Christian discovery. Write to him here for details—minimum age is 15 (or mature 14). The Families Camp, which precedes it (24 July to 4 August, bookings to Canon Norman Hill, The Vicarage, Crowhurst, Lingfield) is already full with a waiting list and we look forward to another super time. We have many other camps coming through the summer and expect lots of visitors. The Summer Festival this year is on the second Saturday in July, 11 July from 2.30 p.m. and will be informal, with music, drama (we hope) and dance. We are expecting a large crowd and hope for a good day.

**Chapters and Conferences** of the Society will keep the place full for the second half of May and the first part of June, when we shall be welcoming brothers and sisters of all the Provinces from the First and Third Order. I think that the novices and postulants will have to go under canvas to make room but we hope they will find it worth it. It will be a special honour to welcome the Archbishop of Canterbury on 29 May.

**Comings and goings** play a big part in our life. We have said goodbye to four novices who began at Glasshampton in February, including Brother Robert who went to his Mother's homeland, the Holy Land, for a visit between here and Glasshampton, and to Julian who is now at Plaistow and to John Turnbull, who left the novitiate but who is closely in touch. We have welcomed many brothers and sisters for retreat and conference, and for 14 February, and many other visitors who find there way here. Nor does the steady flow of wayfarers abate.

*Sister Gabriel writes:*

**LLANDUDNO** Very shortly now, the Festival of Praise, 'Spring into Life', which Brother Silyn referred to in the January Chronicle, will be taking place. The Festival, involving all the Churches, Welsh and English, in North Wales, is being conducted by the Revd. David Watson and his team from S. Michael-

le-Belfry, York. The main events of the Festival take place in the Arcadia Theatre, Llandudno, which is being kindly made available free of charge by the Aberconway Council.

In preparing for the Festival the amount of co-operation and real friendship between Christians of all denominations, who at one time had virtually no contact with one another, have been quite remarkable. Christians throughout the area are expecting great things from the Lord to happen as a result of the Festival.

In every household there are comings and goings of its members, and so we have seen the departure last January of Sister Jannafer who has returned to Compton Durville, her place here having been taken by Sister Hilary. Another arrival was Brother Justin though he has been with us for some time now.

With the season of Lent having just begun we are involved in a number of outside engagements, which will take brothers and sisters as far afield as Rhosymedre in the North and Llandaff in the South.

Last November we received some sad news to the effect that one of our Wayfarer friends, Jock Murray, had died unexpectedly in Falkirk, Scotland. We had expected him to be with us for Christmas. At first when I heard the news I could not believe it, but on contacting the authorities at Plawsworth Reception Centre in Co. Durham, they were able to verify what I had been told. John was a well known visitor to most of our Houses and although drink was his chief problem, off the drink he was a very hard worker, and made his own unique contribution to whatever house he was staying in.

*Brother Peter William writes:*

**TOYNBEE HALL** You will perhaps recall that in the last copy of THE FRANCISCAN Brother Anselm talked about the number of movements that are bound to happen by the law of averages. Our little family in Toynbee certainly seems to have enjoyed its fair share of that.

Since we last wrote Simeon has moved from Toynbee and is now working in a parish in Chesterfield for a short period. Being one of the founder members of S.S.F. in Toynbee we have a lot to thank him for and wish him well in Derbyshire.

Not only, but also. Yes, Sister Skeena has moved back to Compton Durville. She will be greatly missed in Toynbee and round about. Her openness and cheerful disposition has been much appreciated by many and we are sorry to be losing her.

Sister Hannah, on the other hand, has just arrived. It will take a while for her to re-orientate. There is so much going on in Tower Hamlets that she will have to discover and assimilate. We are not sure yet what particular work she will be doing in the area; no doubt that will be made clear in due course. She is particularly interested in Inter-Faith Dialogue and so what better place to be than here which is a traditionally Jewish area now taken over to a large extent by the Islamic Bangladeshi.

So for a while we are going to be three, and we shall have five rooms and are going to try having one room set aside as the chapel and one as the room for everything else. That should make a marked change to the life here. Of course another marked change is that we do not have a priest brother in the house. The local clergy have responded to that in a very encouraging way and we are very grateful

for all the support they are giving to us. It adds another dimension to the life here. This need has also led to a greater involvement with the brothers at Plaistow.

More and more use is being made of what we can offer, though we continue to feel restricted by the constraints of our flat. Leonore continues her work with the Health Clinics and is also doing some educational work at the Mile End Hospital. Because of her fluency in Bengali and great knowledge of the Indian Sub-Continent she is much used for translation and related work. The comment that we hear most is that someone saw her striding along the road and tried to no avail to catch up with her!

I am still working in the Centre for Handicapped Children which is based in Toynbee. I much enjoy doing that and greatly appreciate having learnt how to play again. The residents of Toynbee seem also to absorb a fair amount of time though I do seem to be having a little involvement in other areas of the local community. The area is so deprived that our greatest skill seems to have to be the art of saying 'no' so that we can do justice to the things that we do undertake.

Once again we are at a point of change and the future looks exciting. There is much to be thankful for. We ask for your prayers as we try to discern God's will for us here.

*Sister Teresa writes:*

**COMPTON DURVILLE** Our Community Week this year coincided with the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity so as well as having our usual time together to look at our life to see where we are going and how we are getting there, we had two outings. The first group went to Lee Abbey and then to the Poor Clares at Lynton. There they had the warmest welcome as usual and joined the Sisters at Vespers. The Mother Abbess told them that she had been praying concerning an ecumenical contact for that week when the telephone rang and it was ourselves suggesting a visit—so we were doubly welcome. The next group went to Buckfast Abbey and spent a very profitable time which included a walk on Dartmoor and Benediction sung by the boys of Buckfast School. The only reminder that we were Anglicans came when we were introduced by the Abbot to 'your fellow heretic' in the form of the Abbey's Anglican organist and choir-master.

One of our concerns this winter has been to keep down our heating bills. To this end we have had the lofts insulated and have hung heavy curtains over all outside doors. It makes it difficult to get into the house but it does keep the heat in!

In February we made Lesley Gelder a Novice, keeping the name Lesley; Skeena has returned to Compton Durville and Hannah has taken her place at Toynbee Hall; Joan is going to Birmingham and Patricia has returned to the novitiate at Compton after testing her vocation at Freeland.

The Revd. Bill Scott, well known to the Society for many years, will be leaving his parish of Shepton Beauchamp after Easter in order to test his vocation to the Benedictine life at Nashdom. We will miss him very much but wish him joy in his new venture.

*Brother David writes:*

**GLASSHAMPTON** Since Brother John gave some news in the last issue we have had quite a busy time. Christmas was very joyous and shared with four house guests. Later we entertained our neighbours and local clergy and families for tea. We are now six brothers based here as Brother Andrew David came to replace Brother James Anthony. Then every month we have the joy of a brother from another house to share our life for some four weeks. They all say that they enjoy being here and are grateful for the opportunity of more time for quiet and reading than in the more active houses.

The last of the 1980 groups of novices departed when Brother Raymond left us in February for Canterbury and now we have the 1981 group—Brothers Antony, Jude, Robert and Stewart. They all seem to have settled in happily. There is a steady flow of visitors and guests for retreat, or quiet and rest, and quiet days. The care for guests and the work in house and garden all keep us well occupied and give us the opportunity to learn one of Father Benson's lessons—that 'prayer must have hands and feet'.

A few outside engagements—retreats, sermons, visits to schools—have been fulfilled from the house. On 1 March we had a visit from the Bishop Protector when a friend of Glasshampton, James Roose-Evans, was ordained deacon.

Now Lent is on us and the garden and woods give us the signs of Easter with the Spring flowers and budding trees.

*Brother James Anthony writes:*

**PILTON** The insistent and repetitive demands spoken of in the last issue of THE FRANCISCAN continue as strongly as ever. Mealtimes, naturally, are the most favoured moments for calling on the brothers and few are the meals not punctuated by telephone or door bell.

Of course we survive, and this is perhaps no mean feat. Yet there has been growing the feeling that survival is beside the point. As Thomas Merton wrote—'the problem today is not survival but prophecy'. What is God saying today; what is his word, and who is going to pronounce that word?

Many of the problems of modern society are seen at their starest in places like Pilton, where cuts in the social services affect many, and many more are out of work or threatened with redundancy. It is always the weakest and poorest, God's marginal people, who suffer most. From our prayer and study we must assess what is the best way of creating a more compassionate and caring society in Britain, and then go out and do it.

Some of the brothers took to the streets earlier on this year in a large demonstration for nuclear disarmament, feeling that peace also was an issue central to their faith, and that the present arms race did little to help build a world of justice and peace. Brother Juniper is hoping to gather together a local peace group and has circularized all the neighbouring congregations. Perhaps unity will creep up unawares on Christians as they work together for such important issues.

On a slightly different plane, the Pilton Gala is beginning to loom on the horizon. Much merriment has been caused by the choice of Brother Ian to preside at the

Pilton Pet Show to be held in the church hall, and Brother Crispin's appointment as co-ordinator of the festive procession. This year's theme is 'space travel', and rumour has it that Crispin will head the floats heavily disguised as 'The Thing from outer space', antennae flapping.

*Brother Giles writes:*

**HARBLEDOWN** However settled and stable a friary looks from the outside, there are always subtle shifts of the inner dynamic of its life which can affect it deeply. This time last year we thought we had a settled group of brothers, learning to live together, and gradually developing our life and ministry according to our abilities and our local opportunities. But by the end of the year two of our number had felt it right to withdraw from the friary so that they could develop their Christian vocation and ministry in other ways than being a friar. Brother Andrew Philip, who has been studying theology at the University of Kent at Canterbury for the last eighteen months, is now on leave of absence while he considers his future. He had been at the friary longer than any of us and helped in the early establishment of our life and work in Canterbury. He is still remembered for the contribution he made to the care of young people in the city, ordinary ones, some with problems, some disabled. He is still living in Canterbury while he continues his studies.

At the Candlemass Chapter in February, Brother Stanley was released from his vows and since then has been recommended by A.C.C.M. as an ordination candidate. He is also living in the locality and continuing his studies with the Canterbury School of Ministry. He made a distinct contribution to the domestic life of the friary and also exercised a fruitful ministry as a part-time chaplain at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital. Fortunately Brother John Francis has taken over this work and continues the link. This means that with Brother Ian Leslie's chaplaincy work at Saint Augustine's, the local psychiatric hospital, we have a particular contribution to make in the care of the sick and dying in the local community.

With the departure of two brothers our numbers have been strengthened by the arrival of Brother Ramon (formerly Raymond). He has just completed his time at Glasshampton and is approaching the end of his novitiate. His experience as a priest in various ministries will stand him in good stead for the varied ministries with which we are involved in and from the friary.

In this respect we have reached some sort of plateau, as the requests for groups to come to the friary, visitors to visit, guests to stay, and for outside engagements, have met our capacity to grant them. Last year, for example, we had over eighty organised groups of people coming for visits, quiet days, etc. Some ladies who visited recently expressed surprise at our expertise in giving them hospitality. If only they knew the cost, sometimes! Part of the cost is keeping the friary clean and tidy and we are very grateful for many friends who give of their time and skill to help us in different ways. Because of this we have recently been able to replace some of our furniture and curtains, and get around to re-decorating all the bedrooms. Subtle shifts in the colour scheme also affect the inner dynamic of our community life. Moving away from brilliant white and blackboard black (our previous predominant colour scheme) to peach, tango, french beige, willow and county cream makes all the difference. There was, however, a slight sigh of relief when sunburst was out of stock. You can have too much of a good thing.

*Brother Philip Bartholomew writes:*

**HOOKE** In a few days we will be embarking on the journey through Lent, and by the time you read this we will have celebrated the Joy of Easter. That Joy which comes through sharing in the life of the resurrection. Thinking along these lines, Lent leading to Easter and new life in Christ can help us to see the journey through death leading to a joy to be welcomed and celebrated.

It is with these thoughts in mind that we at the school recall with love and gratitude the life and work of our founder, Brother Owen—known to many who have been here as ‘Father’ or ‘The Old Man’. His death following close after Brother Matthew’s has bereft us of two dear friends and the loss has been felt by staff and boys alike. Our loss has been heightened by the deaths of Brother Bruce’s father, Philip Shakespear’s father, (Philip is Juniper housefather) and the sister of Jim Dean, one of our teachers. Please pray for all of them in their loss.

We celebrated a different Joy, back in Advent when five of our boys were confirmed by Bishop Geoffrey Tiarks (formerly Bishop of Maidstone) who lives over the hill from us in Netherbury. Please pray for Stephen, Simon, Colin, Paul and Anthony—that Christ may strengthen what they have committed to Him in the church.

Like any other school, Christmas started early—in the first week of December for us. We had much to prepare for—Impromptu (!) concert, Carol Service and Christmas Party being the main events. The high point of all this was for me the candlelight carol service, which was a sincere attempt by all who took part to celebrate Christ’s Incarnation. The deep sense of worship was greatly helped by those boys who read the lessons so well, by those who sang and others who accompanied the singing on recorders and clarinets, and of course Christopher Read who always gives of his best on the piano.

The brothers then went to Hilfield for a retreat, given by Brother Anselm, at the end of which Brother Philip Bartholomew made his First Profession.

It wasn’t very long before we saw Brother Anselm again, this time accompanied by Jenny, his sister, to spend Christmas with us. We greatly enjoyed their visit, especially since Anselm was able to be our own priest brother and celebrate the Eucharist both in the school chapel and the parish church.

Since January, Bernard House has had the extra and most welcome help of Andrew George, an old boy of Clifton College, Bristol. Andrew was one of the pilgrims who walked from Hilfield to Crediton last year and spent a night at the school on the way—he just had to come back and experience more of life at Hooke! In September Andrew goes to Trinity College, Cambridge, but in fact leaves us at Easter, and so we thank him for all that he has given us and offer our good wishes and our prayers for his future.

Saying goodbye is not easy when you have to take a big step into the unknown after spending four or five years here—and so we ask you to pray for the following boys who will be leaving us in May, Paul, Kelvin, Stephen, David, Terry, Tony, Paul, Peter and Richard—that God will bless them as they seek to find work and their way in the journey through life.

There is much in the life here to thank God for, not least the opportunities to experience and celebrate Incarnation, Death and Resurrection by living our lives in Christ through the simple offering we make here.

*Brother Jonathan writes:*

**ALNMOUTH** The time between the last edition of the Chronicle and this seems even shorter than usual, due I suspect to my 'month' at Glasshampton in January! David Stephen, our resident weather-man had been forecasting a very severe winter for the north-east, but mercifully to date, he has been proved wrong! And already there are signs of Spring with snowdrops and crocuses springing up all over the garden. And so we look forward to longer days and to the activities of the Spring and Summer. But first, we look back to last year.

**Profession.** For us the 'great event' of the late Autumn was the First Profession of Brother Paschal on 2 December which took place during the Northern Regional Meeting. A large number of brothers, sisters, friends, and Paschal's Mother, Nan, and brothers, Michael and Billy, were able to share our joy. For his pre-profession retreat, Paschal went to the O.H.P. sisters at Whitby, who were very kind. In February, he went to a junior-professed study week at Wantage which from all accounts seems to have been very worthwhile.

**Consultation.** I was privileged, together with Sister Judith, the C.H.N. Superior of their house in Newcastle, to be invited to meet the Appointments Secretaries during their consultation in the Diocese regarding the choice of a new Bishop, which will almost certainly be announced by the time these notes are published. It was a special thrill to be asked by Bishop Ronald to be one of his chaplains at his Installation and Enthronement as Bishop of Southwark on Candlemass Day.

**The New Vicar.** We are looking forward to the institution of Jack Rutherford as Vicar of Alnmouth and Lesbury on 2 May. Brother Edmund and I, with some of the parishioners, were asked to attend his installation as a Canon of the Cathedral in Newcastle on Advent Sunday. We, as brothers, have very much enjoyed our work in the parish during the interregnum and we pray that Canon Rutherford's ministry amongst us will be greatly blessed.

**Local Involvements.** In recent months we have been able to extend a little our ministry in the locality. A group of Vietnamese refugees will soon be coming to live in Alnwick and Brother Jerome has been appointed Secretary of the Support Group. Brother Peter Douglas has begun a regular ministry at the Duke School in Alnwick and Jerome has begun a similar ministry at the Duchess School in Alnwick and Castle Dene School, in Newcastle Prison and Borstal.

Brother Marcus continues his ministry at Acklington Prison and upon occasions takes the Sunday Services; usually one of us goes with him and at the Carol Services this year, Peter Douglas sang and played his cornet. As at Hilfield, we are glad of the opportunity to link-up with a local borstal, and lads from Deerbolt Borstal visit the Friary for a week twice a year. Jerome is the 'link-man' and visits the borstal in between times.

**Study.** In the midst of all our activities, we also endeavour to see that our primary life of prayer, study and Community life is carefully balanced. We don't always succeed! In recent months, the work of study has received greater emphasis. A group of us have been meeting with our local tertiaries every six weeks to try and think through some of the issues that have come out of the preparation for the 'Gospel Now' Conference at Hilfield this Summer. As I reported in the last issue, we will be having a special series of seminars in the last week of March led by the

Revd. Robin Gill. Our monthly study evening has been taking on a somewhat different shape. One of us has been talking about a major personal interest and just sharing it with our brothers—Keith on Architecture; Paschal on the Scottish Episcopal Church; Peter Douglas on Calligraphy; Jonathan on Politics—that says something about the width of our interests and there is more to come!

We are delighted that Canon John Turnbull of Embleton Vicarage has agreed to be our Lent Preacher this year.

**Yorkshire.** Although we consider our ministry is primarily in the North-East, we have been very glad in the last year to develop our links with Yorkshire—in February a delightful group of young people from Drighlington, (Peter Dougas' former parish), came to stay during half-term week, closely followed by a group of students from Bradford University. In March we shall welcome a regular visit from Leeds University. The Leeds University Theatre Group stayed with us early in January when they presented 'Murder in the Cathedral' in Newcastle and Alnwick.

In May Keith will be making a visit to Wensley Deanery and a good deal of preaching and mission work is beginning in Leeds. Our Tertiaries, John Dennis, Bishop of Knaresborough, and his wife, Dorothy, visited us for new year and will soon be moving from Ripon to Leeds itself—so all these things seem to be leading us down into Yorkshire and for this we are glad.

**Prayer and Silence.** We have had a number of weekends recently on prayer and silence. Bishop Michael Ramsey came for a weekend in early December and Bishop Bill Lash led an Adventure into Silence in January—despite snow and ice! At the end of February, Father Peter Dodson comes to lead a weekend on Contemplative Prayer. It is significant that all these weekends are heavily subscribed and in addition, the number of individuals and other groups wanting to explore silence and retreat continues to grow.

**Ecumenical.** Brother Edmund was able to go to the Induction of the two Baptist Lay Pastors in Alnwick in December, and since then, one of them, James Tweedale, has been to visit us. We hope to strengthen these links in the future.

**Death.** We were deeply saddened by the death of Archdeacon Harry Bates just before Christmas. Harry Bates was a dear and good friend to us and we shall miss his wisdom and affectionate interest. We offer to Mary, his widow, our love and sympathy.

**Welcome Home.** We are looking forward to the return of Brother Derek after his year in the American Province. It will be good to have him back.

**Brother Denis.** I am glad to say that Brother Denis is very well and is increasingly active in preaching, conducting retreats and talking to groups in the Friary. He paid his second visit to London in recent years in January to preach at a memorial Service for his great friend, Eric Heywood, at S. Paul's School.

**Future Events.** And so, we look forward to the months ahead. A number of interesting events/weekends are planned. If any of our readers would like further information of these events or hope to visit us in the Summer months, then please write to me.

Firstly, there are the various Open Days: on 23 May, the Youth Day (for those 15 and over); the Summer Festival on 4 July when the Bishop of Knaresborough

will preach and Brother Angelo will speak; the Children's Day on 11 July; in addition, the S.S.F., the U.S.P.G. and C.M.S. are having a day of celebration in honour of the world-wide Church on 6 June, beginning with a Eucharist on the Golf Course and various activities for people of all ages in the afternoon, culminating with an evening act of worship in the Friary.

There are three important conference weekends: A weekend on S. Francis, led by Brother Angelo from 26—28 June. A weekend on Dance in Worship, led by Gillian Martlew (formerly of the Ballet Rambert) from 28—30 August. And a Jewish/Christian weekend, led by Rabbi Michael Boyden and Dr. John Sawyer, from 4—6 September, with opportunities for being present at Jewish and Christian worship. Finally, we are hosting an important day conference on The Future of the Rural Church—'The Challenge of Change'—on Saturday, 9 May.

Please pray for all these events.

**Twenty Years.** Twenty years ago on 15 August, 1961 Brother Michael and the first brothers came to Alnmouth—we thank God for them and all that He has given us in these twenty years and ask Him to bless us as we seek to live out our Franciscan vocation in this place.

*Brother Victor writes:*

**PLAISTOW** To his many friends, family and for ourselves, the death of Brother Maurice last December was sudden and something of a shock. Although Maurice was 83 years old, his purposeful stride and erect bearing suggested someone much younger. He died following two emergency operations in the London Hospital, where his surgeon said that he had to keep reminding himself of Maurice's age, as he had the body of a man twenty years younger. Maurice joined the community following the death of his wife, and after a number of years in the office at Hilfield, helped Brother Arnold found the house in Birmingham. His time in Plaistow was quietly spent in visiting in the area and being our sacristan. A man with a high sense of duty, he found change difficult to cope with, and deafness made him feel somewhat isolated. One incident, however, that will long be remembered here is when he was hit by a car outside the house; he dusted himself down, apologised to the driver for getting in the way of his car, and strode off down the street. He was a mere 80 years old at the time. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

In the new year, we discovered that woodworm had invaded our floorboards. This led to a few weeks of chaos and heavily pungent smells whilst it was sorted out, but we now have more even and less creaky floors as a result.

Brother Julian arrived in January and is making a most valuable contribution to our life. He is working for the Community Relations Department of the British Council of Churches, with particular reference to employment. He is also involved with the Newham Community Renewal Programme in the issue of the new Nationality Bill, with the Newham Rights Committee and the Newham Disarmament Group.

It is now a year since Brother Victor John became Team Vicar-designate of S. Martin's Church, Plaistow. The church and halls are requiring a very great deal of structural and maintenance work, which is being tackled with great energy. This

has not been at the expense of ministering to the congregation and parish, and in many ways it has been a difficult assignment we have asked Victor John to do.

Also, Canon Eric Shipman, who has been vicar of this parish for well over thirty years and who took over S. Philip's Church from us in 1970, is to retire in May. He has battled valiantly with ill-health for some time, and we wish him a happy and peaceful retirement.

Tristam has been much involved with the production of the community's new edition of The Daily Office, due out this summer. A great deal of work has been put into it by the Liturgy Committee, bringing as many texts as possible into line with those of the new Alternative Services Book 1980, but at the same time providing a deal of enriching material, a good proportion of which has strong Franciscan overtones! If you would like to know more about the book, do write to Tristam.

*The Sisters write:*

**NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME** At the Third Order meeting at the house on 26 February, we celebrated the occasion of the profession of four local Tertiaries; the group continues to thrive and it is good to have more professed members among the group.

After all the building excitement of last year, the work of the house is more or less back to routine—though we hasten to add not without sparkle, and not without a variety of outside activity. Eleanor Bridget has been spending one morning each week at the Stoke side of the North Staffs. Polytechnic, learning more about this type of ministry from the Chaplain, staff and students. The chaplaincy is a fairly new innovation at Stoke and its development is still very much in an exploratory phase—which makes it an exciting and interesting place to be.

Sister Mildred has been visiting Hillport House, a local authority geriatric home near by. Despite warnings by the staff that the residents would be unresponsive, she is finding a positive and warm response; maybe they recognise the habit.

All of us are coming and going between mission visits and there are lots of 'one off' invitations of various kinds. Sister Nan is taking part in Lichfield's 'Open Door' scheme for schoolchildren visiting the cathedral in June. This is very good for it is an opportunity to contribute something in the diocese, especially so as, this year, Eileen was invited to attend the Bishop's conference for the diocese, at Swanwick, which she found stimulating and very enjoyable.

Sister Lynda Mary and Nan are being used increasingly for their musical talents and they are stimulating each other too. It is good to hear melodious sounds permeating through the house. But the house is quiet too, and this represents the aspect so much searched for both by individuals and groups. Increasingly, we are asked to cater and lead: increasingly, people come to talk on a one to one basis, and then seek quiet in the chapel. For us, it is a very great privilege to find our home is valued and is regarded as a place of healing.

*Brother Tom writes:*

**LIVERPOOL** 'Do you know Brother Ronald?', is what many people ask wherever the rest of us go in and around Liverpool. Yes, we do, is the answer—and he is carrying on his unique apostolate in Warrington and beyond. Brother Cuthbert, still indefatigably working with the Industrial Mission, keeps us hopping as his innumerable friends ring up or call to see him.

Brother Cecil has his friends, from the youth groups at the local church and families in the neighbourhood, some of whom have been extremely kind to us. Brother James William keeps up the good work at S. Anne's and his healing ministry hardly needs re-mentioning. I have found part-time work of a pastoral nature in a mixed-neighbourhood parish, S. Margaret's, Princes Road.

Our guest 'wing' is now completed and we have been able to provide accommodation to young persons in need on a few occasions. Brother Jude stopped here on his pre-Glasshampton break and Brother Julian has visited us a few times.

The Bishop of Liverpool, the Dean, and the Bishop of Warrington, along with several other local clergy, have presided at our Thursday evening eucharist. It is good to thus share the eucharist and the evening meal with them and their spouses, and it helps us to feel truly a part of the Body of Christ in this place.

*Brother Malcolm writes:*

**TRURO** Previously, Brother Michael has mentioned the system of pastoral visitations to parishes in the diocese, whereby each parish is visited approximately every fifteen months. These visits are a source of strength and encouragement not only to the particular parish but to the whole diocese and gives us all a sense of 'family', with many areas of common concern and opportunities for thankfulness.

I would like to share with you, very briefly, a scheme that has recently come into operation directly as a result of the pastoral visits and has been set in motion by Michael and myself. On a visit to a parish, the bishop will be shown many things and will really try to get an idea of what makes the parish 'tick'. He will almost certainly visit those within the parish who are now too old or infirm to get along to church—the housebound. These people, and there are many of them, can no longer take an active part in the on-going life and mission of the church and can at times feel cut-off, perhaps even lonely and unwanted. Many such people were asking 'What can I do, sat here at home for so much of the time, and with so much time on my hands?'. And the answer is of course, 'Say your prayers, faithfully, each day'.

So was born 'Partners in Prayer'. Briefly, it works as follows: those who wish to become a partner are asked to pledge themselves to pray for half an hour for six days a week; to pray for the mission of the church in the diocese and beyond, for the world and for particular people and concerns that are of importance to them. Each partner is given a card, saying that he or she has promised to remain faithful to this, so far as circumstances and health permit. Because not everyone finds the idea of half an hour of prayer immediately easy, from time to time helps and guidelines are sent out by us to enable the partners to get the most out of his time with the Lord.

At the time of writing this, we have almost a hundred partners and many more have expressed interest, seeing it as a potent and powerful force for good within our diocese and beyond.

Life at Number 32 is very busy and we hope happy. There is always a great deal to be done and we do thank God for his many blessings to us.

*Brother Peter Timothy writes:*

**BELFAST** This is a very busy, active house with three of our six brothers fully occupied outside the Friary on most days of the week, Benjamin away in Birmingham during term-times, and each of us having some engagements outside our daily commitments. A great deal gets 'done'. But our Chapel life gets 'done' as well, and after some changes recently in our timetable and our Chapel services, we have all begun to feel the deepening of our fellowship with each other and with Our Lord. 'To be honest', as Brother David Jardine says, we are coming to realise more and more the value of our chapel life together as a real and powerful contribution towards the healing of our land.

David's daily round at the prison continues to bear fruit in changed lives changed in direction, to point to God, to a God who sees a long prison sentence as an opportunity as well as a calamity. David is truly used in the prison as one of God's instruments of peace as the Lord steadily adds to his Bible Study Groups 'those who—are—being saved . . . .

As you read and watch our Northern Ireland headlines and news, think how, what you are seeing and hearing affects an already delicate and constantly tense situation which exists, in the world in which David works. Then turn that listening and viewing into a constant prayer for him and all other Prison Chaplains in Northern Ireland.

David Jardine and Damian have been broadcasting: David on B.B.C. Radio Ulster and Damian on Downtown Radio. Both have given a week's *Just a Moment* series of talks. Wherever we have been during those weeks we have had a great talking point. All these sort of opportunities help us to become known more widely, and in the best possible way.

Another way in which the existence of religious communities in the Church of Ireland is made known is through some 'Celebrations' towards which Damian has been planning and working. One of these events, the 'Franciscan Family Weekend' in mid-May is at Ampertain, the home of Mr. Aubrey Clarke and his Tertiary wife, Jill. Their house near Maghera (pronounced Ma-her-ra) in Co. Londonderry, is a huge and beautiful ancestral home next door to the family linen mill. On the following Saturday, 23 May we 'Celebrate the Religious Life' in Belfast at S. Mary Magdalén's Church whose Rector, Billy Lendrum, has given us a great welcome. Our Bishop, Arthur, is to celebrate and Brother David Jardine will preach. The afternoon will be in the hands of Sister Anna S.L.G. who lives near us in Belfast, Sister Valerie C.S.C., John Gribben C.R.—a Belfast-born priest whom we first knew in his curacy days in the City, and Brother Edward who will be visiting Third Order members both North and South. Each will bring their own particular contribution towards 'celebrating' the Religious Life.

Brother Eric completed several happy months with us before moving back to England in February. He had been literally as well as metaphorically taken to the hearts of the Shankill folk; now Paschal has begun visiting homes in Holy Redeemer Parish and will soon be appearing in the Sunday preachers' list.

Our kitten *Clare* has survived her operation! On her first visit to the vet, he discovered of all things—a heart murmur! A second visit, after a suitable interval, when a different anaesthetic was used, resulted in a successful operation. However

that means that we now have two 'cardiac-risk' members in our family: Peter Timothy and Clare!! Both seem to be coping with their respective surgical repairs, and are going from strength to strength.

When we moved into Deerpark Road five years ago we began a weekly 'At Home' on Thursday nights at 7.30 p.m. We have a Eucharist with an address, followed by tea and cakes and 'crack' (Northern Ireland's version of 'talk'). The fact that—like the Windmill Theatre—our 'At Homes' never close, but go on all the year round, is in itself a sign of stability in our world. For some folk, our Thursday nights have become an anchor of hope in their lives. We have about a dozen each week. For the brothers too it is important as it is the one piece of outreach that we do together. Sometimes the gatherings are ecumenical and sometimes they are international. We light one candle at the Eucharist. So the light of our one small candle lit at our weekly Thursday evening Eucharist here in the Belfast Friary joins with many other candles burning brightly throughout the world on that day. And once again we believe that 'the Light of Christ HAS come into the World'.

*Brother Wulfram writes:*

**MTONI** The work of building our new house at S. Mark's carries on very well. After having received some money from our Provincial Bursar and Holland, Matias (building contractor) has been very busy looking for building materials. But, although there is a great shortage of everything in this country, we are glad to see that he has managed to have many things ready in stock. Soon we shall get the city council registration certificate, then Matias can start to lay down the foundations. Petro and Ninian are still there at S. Mark's College. Petro was made a deacon last December and all being well will be ordained a priest next December. In December Ninian also sat for part I of the Diploma in Theology (Makerere University). At present he is still waiting for the results. He will be sitting for part II this November. Part II includes a Research Paper and he is doing research into African Traditional Music with a special study of the Music of the Lue and Kuria people in North Tanzania.

Lately, Mr. Julius Nyerere has been re-elected our president for another five years. The war between Uganda and Tanzania is finished. But owing to this war there is a great shortage of many things, for instance this week there is not toilet soap and bread.

Towards the end of last year we had many joyous and great occasions, one of these occasions was Brother Hugh and Kenneth Yona's profession. Also we had a visit from The Bishop of Hereford, John Eastaugh, who left behind for us piles of clothes, medicine, Hereford mugs and Bibles. We are so grateful to him for these things as we were really in need of them. We have enjoyed having Mrs. Yonge (Brother Amos' mother) who lived and worked here twenty-one years ago.

By the time this is in print, Brother Aidan should have returned to England after living in Africa for sixteen years. He has left wonderful memories in Africa, as Africans will never forget his tremendous work he has done, as a priest in Zambia and chaplain of Missions to Seamen in Dar es Salaam. Kenneth has passed his driving test, now he does all the food shopping for us. Tshiamala is continuing

with his studies at Selly Oak but we look forward to having him back later on this year. Leonard carries on very well with his course at Ifakara Trade School. Last December he was here on holiday. It was very nice to have him back.

Our normal life of preaching, teaching and gardening continues very well. Brother Yuda keeps bringing back with him pupils, who want to know more of our life as Franciscans. In April Ninian will be conducting the Music Society Choir in a performance of Haydn's *Little Organ Mass* at Azania Lutheran Church in Dar es Salaam, as well as giving a short recital on the new pipe organ which has just been installed—a gift from the Lutheran Church in Holland.

Brethren, remember us in your prayers.

*Brother John-Charles writes:*

**PACIFIC PROVINCE** In the latter months of 1980 I spent a longer time in New Zealand than I have done before. I was greatly encouraged by the good spirit and the firmly established life of prayer which clearly characterises the new Friary in Parnell. It has already established a wide circle of relationships with a diverse group of people of all ages and classes out of which are growing a very diverse group of personal apostolates. In addition Leo Anthony and Matthew Bruce have done good work in the City Mission; George, who has done wonders with the gardens so that we always have fruit and flowers to share with others, has recently begun a very Franciscan work with the aged. Reginald continues to care for the Third Order which is growing. Leo Anthony has taken over the care of the Companions and is planning a wide tour in the early part of 1981. There are already signs that this part of our life will grow again. A number of encouraging enquiries have been made about the First Order.

During this visit I was able to conduct a number of retreats, some for Third Order members and Companions and some for wider groups. I took two Schools of Prayer which were well attended and engaged in a number of other ministries. It was a richly blessed visit and I am thankful to God to have been used in this way.

On my return to Australia I took up residence once more at Brookfield which will be my headquarters until I go overseas in May.

At Morris House things are going well under Bruce-Paul's guidance. This is a very demanding ministry which tests our Brothers to the full. It has its rewards and its pain.

Brother Joseph who is in residence there has also been studying for his Arts degree at the University of Queensland and has had a very successful year, passing his subjects with distinction.

The Australian houses are having two more Island Brothers to stay. Joseph Jennl and Frances Joses returned home in mid-1980 and they have been replaced with Timothy Joseph and Simon Barclay. Later in 1981 we are hoping that Andrew Patteson and Phillip Marsden will share in the life of the New Zealand Custody. We believe that these visits are a help not only to the Brothers from the Northern Region but also to those of us in Australia and New Zealand.

Brookfield has only eight Brothers at the moment. They carry on remarkably under Rodney's able guidance and are engaged in a fascinating variety of ministries both within and outside the Friary.

The Pottery is producing remarkably fine products and assisting the finances of the house in no small way.

We have been privileged to have Mark Charles with us for a year. We are grateful to the American Province for this exchange. He has been an able Novice Guardian and has given us much in many ways.

The Hermitage at Stroud is beginning to have a settled and definite pattern of life and will increasingly have a wide effect. The Brothers there have worked very hard and the gardens are beginning to produce fruit and the hens enable the Hermitage to supply Islington as well as itself with eggs. Brother Brian is being used for retreats and quiet days.

At Islington there are now only three Brothers, but their ministry is widely spread. The Friary has an established place in the Diocese of Newcastle and its easy access to Sydney means that a ministry of outreach to people there is growing.

The Clares now have the chance, as building finishes, to establish properly for the first time their enclosure, their hiddenness, and their life of prayer in its normal conditions. On 31 December I ceased to be their Warden and my place has been taken by Brother Brian. He will represent them also on the Advisory Council for Religious Communities. I resign as Secretary of that body at its February meeting.

There has been throughout the area a lively interest in the discussions preparatory for the Conference in June. Much of what has been said cannot really be put on paper, but all seem to have gained personally and corporately from the inter-change between the Orders and from the consideration of the 'Gospel Now'.

Will you join with us in our prayers for an increase of vocations to the First Order in Australia? In January the third 'Friar for a Fortnight' programme will be held. This time some sixteen young men between the ages of seventeen and twenty-five will share our life. I believe that these programmes will in due course produce vocations. The aim, as Rodney says, is 'to share our lives and ourselves so that men can see that the life of a friar is a proper, satisfying and liberating way of living out our Baptismal vocation'.

Shortly after the programme Rodney will go to the United States for a well-deserved three months' study leave.

Ronald Stevens was clothed as a Novice on the eve of S. Francis' Day and is engaged in voluntary work in Auckland among the disadvantaged as well as continuing his novice formation. Caleb who joined the New Zealand Friary in August is developing very useful contacts with our Maori Anglicans, and it was a joy to see Leo Anthony admit some Maoris as Companions.

*Brother Peter writes:*

**ISLINGTON N.S.W.** 'Cast your bread upon the waters . . .'. At Petertide 1980, I was invited to be the guest of honour at the Old Cottonian (Bangalore) reunion in Melbourne. I had taught in the Bishop Cotton Schools for eight years, from 1945 to 1953, while a member of the Brotherhood of S. Peter. The men whom I remember as teenagers at school had subscribed to pay my fare to Melbourne and they sent me back to Newcastle with a generous donation for the Society. I was able to tell these 'boys' that my association with S.S.F., whose habit I now wear, began in point of fact, during my stay in the Brotherhood at Bangalore over thirty years ago. One of our brotherhood, George Yesudas Martyn, had been in Christa Seva Sangha; the Bishop of our neighbouring diocese, Bill Lash, visited us on (all too rare) occasions. When, therefore, we entered the Church of South India (1947—does anyone now remember the storm in the Anglo-Catholic teacup?) and needed an Anglican straw to clutch at in our temporary isolation, it seemed natural to accept the offer of Algy Robertson to take us on as 'companions'. Consequently, I decided to make my 1951 furlough retreat at Hilfield under Father Charles Preston. The seed sown took twenty years to mature before my profession in the First Order at Jagarara in Papua New Guinea.

Enough of reminiscence: what of life today in Newcastle? Martyn Francis is on leave of absence at the moment, but the life of the custody seems to go quietly ahead and we feel conscious that we are coming to be accepted as a normal part of church life here. We ourselves regard the maintenance of the Stroud Hermitage as a major task. Apart from that our 'works' ('What do you people *do*?') have included religious instruction in day and Sunday schools, hospital visiting, delivery of meals on wheels, Missions to Seamen, to which Brother Joseph who joined us from Brisbane in January has added a working association with Matthew Talbot

Hostel for homeless men, and so it goes on. This work of Joseph's should be a clergy is trying to re-invigorate in this diocese. He attended and preached at their S. Vincent de Paul Society.

Masseo has established a valuable link with the Y.A.F., which a group of younger clergy is trying to re-invigorate in this diocese. He attended and preached at their camp in Advent and has further engagements with them for 1981.

*Brother Alfred writes:*

**NORTHERN REGION** At the Regional Chapter in December the brothers unanimously agreed to the division of the Province. The Chapter of the Southern Region had already made this decision and it will now go to the F.O.B.C. for ratification. The Chapter postponed the election of the Guardians of the two custodies until after the F.O.B.C. and Philip and Daniel will continue as Guardians till then.

The Chapter also decided to give lik lik hap back to the Diocese of Port Moresby. We have been unable to find a brother to be with Kabay and he himself will be away for some months this year. This will take place at the end of June when Philip and Alfred have returned from England. After that when we visit Port Moresby we will have to follow custom and look for wantoks to put us up.

Colin Peter, Samson Amoni, Andrew Patteson and Philip Marsden were all elected to profession. Philip visited the Solomons during January and they were professed on the Feast of the Epiphany. Four days later Andrew Patteson and Philip Marsden left for New Zealand where they will be for this year. They were able to join some of the brothers visiting around New Zealand and during the year together with one of the novices they will be participating in a non-residential course for religious run by Roman Catholic communities.

Timothy Joseph and Simon Barclay have settled in well in Australia and we hope to send two more brothers when they return in August. These visits are proving to be very worthwhile and gives the brothers experience of working outside the traditional church ministry in P.N.G. and the Solomons. We are very grateful for the help the Minister General gives the region to enable us to send the brothers to different countries.

Stephen Lambert is well and is much better after his operation. Daniel will be having his leave in England in March and will be staying on for some months afterwards. Michael Davis is on his way back to the Solomons and it is expected he will go to Taroniara.

Geoffrey Leonard has moved to Honiara and this year will be working for the Province of Melanesia helping to produce cassette tapes. He has also been appointed Assistant Guardian. Philip has appointed Liam Novice Guardian and he has moved to Alangaula where Francis Joses and Joseph Jennl are now part of the family.

Comins Romano after nearly two years at Haruro has returned to Honiara.

Hilarion did not go on to Life Profession.

Philip recently conducted an ordination retreat and afterwards preached the sermon at the ordination. Randolph and three of the novices went with him. They spent the night at a village on the coast and the next morning walked for three hours

along the beach to the village where the ordination was held. Philip then walked for two days to his village for his rest time and the others made their way back to Haruro.

Andrew went to Brisbane for three weeks in January to be with his mother and is now back at Goroka hospital. In May, Kabay will be going to the Diocese of Carpentaria for his leave and to conduct missions. He will stay on to meet the people when they have their synod and then visit the Companions in that diocese.

*Brother Norman Crosbie writes:*

**AMERICAN PROVINCE** The American Province has been adjusting over the past few months to our changed situation. The brothers at the 'new' Little Portion are settled into life in a smaller friary, closer to our Poor Clares. The prayer life and hospitality continues on Long Island. We have been blessed this past year in having Brother Derek from the European Province with us and his good humor, intellect, and presence has contributed greatly to the settling of this house. Brother Sebastian hopes to have a few months in England this summer for a much needed rest following his missionary work in Trinidad and New York.

On the east coast we have had the Minister General and Benedict visit, and look forward to a visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury at the Cathedral of S. John the Divine in New York, in May.

On the west coast, Brother John Rohim is visiting from our house in Trinidad, and has taken to the Bishop's Ranch and San Damiano well.

In December, Brother Michael Davis left us for the Pacific, after having been with us in our Trinidad house. His simple, prayerful, and loving ways at the Trinidad General Hospital won him many friends, and I am sure brought many suffering people to our blessed Lord. We miss him, and pray God to bless him in his new work.

Brother Rodney, from the Pacific, is spending a semester at the General Theological Seminary, and it is good to have him visit with us at the Provincialate.

The Province has its Provincial Chapter from 14–21 May and I ask you to pray for the conforming of the brothers to the mind of Christ.

All the brothers are looking forward to a period of greater settledness following Governor Reagan's election as President, and it is our hope

too, that in the years to come God will bless us and increase our numbers; thus allowing us greater stability in our serving Him and his Church.

God bless you and keep us in your prayers.

*Sister Cecilia writes:*

**SAN FRANCISCO** Sister Pamela is spending six months this year in the English Province and looks forward to meeting as many as possible of our Sisters and Brothers in the three Orders there. We welcome Sister Pauline to Army Street for a similar period.

Ruth and I are pleased to be attending our First Order Sisters' Chapter and the Conference in May, after which Ruth is adding on overdue vacation time.

While her parents were here in the Spring, Catherine Joy took some vacation but couldn't resist popping down to a ship or two to give her folks an idea of her life as Port Representative for the Episcopal Seamen's Service.

In all, and for all our comings and goings, we give thanks to God for his love and blessings and pray that we may be good stewards of his gifts.

Loving greetings from us all.

## The Wren

Time, in this timeless age, to hear the wren sing, the rain gather,  
The wind sigh, mustering its empty power.  
And then the mist of rain bless the dry earth  
And the wren sing in the dry brain.

Words fall like throbbing water, like thrashing hail,  
Bruising and breaking. Yes, yes, all is well  
For future fruiting and rooting, growth and maturing,  
Feeding and rolling and raking ; cut and dug,  
Planted, to shoot and grow.

Costly the fruit

So carried home.

But silence and stillness bear unsown flowers,  
Unobserved, and therefore undesired ;  
Smothering like weeds a bank with unexpected glory  
To share the Kingdom.

And the timeless wren sings.

# What is His Humility?

BY LIONEL BLUE



ALTHOUGH it is rarely out of the headlines, Judaism is the smallest of that select club of the Higher Religions, and Christianity the largest. Being a Jew in a Christian country is like driving a small Fiat or a mini-car close to a great container lorry. You get a bit worried if the lorry goes out of control, a bit apprehensive.

Religions which come later have to develop a theology about those which come earlier. The Koran finds a place for Christians and Jews, the New Testament has a place for Jews (an unpleasant one), and the Old Testament has a place for idolaters (equally unpleasant). Unless the scriptures are taught in a highly sophisticated way to a highly sophisticated audience, the result is prejudice and prejudice can be explosive.

The anti-Judaism of the gospels can become the anti-semitism of the 19th and 20th centuries, and that can and does turn into Auschwitz and Dachau. But how do you deal with such things when the roots are in the holy of holies? It's an uncomfortable question, nobody likes asking it at ecumenical meetings, but it's there.

Rabbinic Judaism was the answer for a closed and traditional society. Most Jews now live in an open and permissive one. They are curious about Christianity. Does it have answers they don't about women's lib, and gay lib and all the other libs. Probably it doesn't, and Jews will have to work out their own, which won't in fact be very different from the current Christian ones (this is rather galling!).

The two religions get worried by different things. Christian hang-ups are birth-control and divorce. These are non-issues, theologically, among Jews. Jewish hang-ups are inter-marriage, food and family. Neither religion understands why each others hang-ups are important for them.

Jews had a love affair with Marxism and the left over fifty years ago, when Christians were on the right, flirting with law, order and anti-Semitism. Jews have since moved right and Christians have moved left. The modern ones talk about the Third World, and land reforms and illiteracy. The Jewish world has become middle class through its own efforts, and doesn't have its own Third World to feel personally guilty about.

Jews are fascinated and repelled by the subjective and personal character of the Christian experience. It seems exciting but neurotic to be 'converted' or 'born again' (Judaism must seem quite flat to Christians, with its myriad laws and never ending commentaries). Some wonder if they can tame and Judaize such an experience. Can they incorporate some Christian results without Jesus or Christ? After all, Christianity has done it with Judaism!

Post-war Judaism is dominated by the Holocaust in the past and the state of Israel in the present. Some Christians want to have Judaism without the State. For most Jews, they cannot be separated. This may change, but only a very few cracks are showing even now when the Diaspora and the Begin government are drifting apart.

Christians try to transcend suffering, Jews try to live with it. The ways of spirituality are different too. Jews get their humility (such as it is) from humour, and their piety from argument. For real inner searching, they go to therapists and counsellors because they think these are scientific. Christians are attracted to Jung and Jews to Freud. Some more generalisations: Christians spiritualise things, Jews try to hallow them. Both religions think of themselves as warm, caring and kind-hearted (conversely the other must be formal, form-ridden and cold). Jews don't have much feeling for theology, and Christians don't for canon law. They don't understand how such things can be central for the other.

Jews are not really interested in Christianity, they are interested in Christians. The thing which interests them is a Christian's love affair with God, and how one lives with it. Since the Holocaust, such simplicity is not very easy for Jews, and it is no use trying to get to it by evading the tough questions, the difficult ones. The love of God is worth finding, but not on the cheap. Do Christians have it on the cheap? Jews are suspicious but curious. Judaism is a very personal world, so people's life stories matter, and their formal beliefs do not. Lots of Jews are very devout, and keep traditions, and go to synagogue, and are quite agnostic, and occasionally atheist. Does a Jew have to believe in God? No one is quite sure. It is irrelevant, really, for the question is 'Does God believe in him?' and of that, he is quite sure.

When Judaism goes wrong, it degenerates into secular communalism, and politics—a religion of unending committees. When Christianity goes off, it seems to go hygienic, and becomes pop. I once, from very limited experience, tried to explain the Charismatic Movement to my

colleagues, and its phenomena. The result was shattered disbelief. I suppose a Christian would find a Talmud session mind blowing as well.

When the two religions dialogue, they like the other to be 'authentic'. Jews like nuns to wear wimples, and Christians want earlocks and tassels. Unfortunately, the 'authentic' lot tend to keep to themselves (medieval dress has medieval effects). Only the more liberal really fraternise, so there is a feeling of being cheated. 'Is she a real nun?'; 'Is he a real Jew?'. 'Why, she(he) is exactly like us!'. This assimilation may make bells ring out in heaven, but on earth it is 'Vive la difference'. Do people really want Celtic and Rangers to combine?

The thing I have got out of Christianity is silence, and some elementary advice in how to use it. It is not small, because in it I can find my God, and not just the God of my fathers. The latter has been driven into me since childhood; the former has been D-I-Y. Christians take this personal private search very seriously (and sentimentally) and I am grateful.

I think Judaism is good at families—nice families or quarrelling families, it doesn't matter. A congregation is always a family. I get a bit lost after a Christian service ends, the family feeling is lost quite fast, and there doesn't seem to be anything there. For Jews, religious experience has to express itself in communal forms, otherwise, where is it?

I have given some random observations on Jewish-Christian dialogue. They are generalised, but true. To get beyond easy good cheer, and tea party ecumenism means encountering the other religion as it is in itself and to itself—in other words, entering its inner mysteries. If you decide to have a go, prepare to be shaken.

P.S. Teresa of Avila said that if there were two ways of getting there, choose the harder one because God probably preferred it.

*Lionel Blue is a Rabbi in the Beth Din Reform Synagogues of Great Britain, a writer and a regular radio broadcaster.*

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Violent antipathies are always suspicious, and betray a secret affinity.

WILLIAM HAZLITT.

## Meeting the Stranger

BY ROGER HOOKER



MEETING the stranger is a paradoxical experience: on the one hand every stranger is different. He confronts us with another world of thought and experience and so is at once an invitation and a challenge; a source of attraction, and a menace to our own security. On the other hand every act of meeting is the same. The process of getting to know another person or group, of winning their trust and confidence, seems to make similar demands and raises similar questions however diverse the individuals or groups concerned may be.

I spent thirteen years in India, the last six in Varanasi (Benares), the most sacred city of the Hindus, where I studied at the Sanskrit University, a centre of traditional Hindu learning. This was a new and exciting experience, for Hinduism was a bewildering and unfamiliar world. Yet at the same time it was a very ordinary experience. I often found myself reflecting that my ministry in Varanasi was very little different from what it had been many years before when I had been a curate in north-east England.

In this article I want to consider this paradox of strangeness and familiarity.

I was made vividly aware of it at a meeting earlier this year (1980). I had been invited to give an address at a week-end conference organised by a local church in Birmingham, where I now live. The theme of the conference was to be the Church's outreach in the local community and there were to be two other speakers besides myself—a nurse who runs the church's youth group, and a priest who runs a night shelter for men who, temporarily or permanently, have no home. The youth group is attached, if somewhat loosely, to the church, while the only formal church link the night shelter has is in the person of the priest and his helpers. My ministry among Asians (both in India and in Birmingham) was seen as further removed still from any church 'centre'.

Thus the conference was to discuss three different examples of outreach, each one further from the church base than the last, but were they so different from one another that the conference would lack unity? Was there not a risk that it would break into three disconnected pieces? It was to discuss this question that the planning

group invited the three of us to meet them one evening a few weeks beforehand.

To our surprise and relief we very quickly found that we had a wealth of common experience. The problem of fragmentation did not exist. The nurse told us that she had spent her first six months with the youth group 'hovering about on the edges' not knowing what she was there for. I said this was my experience in Varanasi. The priest said his values and assumptions were being constantly challenged by the supposedly deprived people among whom he worked. They were not troubled by their own failure in the eyes of society. This made him think again—what are success and failure? I said in response to this that Hindu attitudes had challenged many of my values and assumptions, and compelled me to ask how far these were truly Christian and how far merely Western or English.

All three of us said we had had to discover new resources of security from which to live. The fact of finding ourselves in a strange environment had compelled us to do this. We had all experienced the suspicion of some of our fellow-Christians who felt that teenagers, the homeless or Hindus were a threat to their precarious sense of personal and corporate identity. Indeed the three of us found our own sense of identity challenged both by those into whose world we had entered, and by yet other Christians who either put us on a pedestal—'what wonderful work you are doing'—or else thought we were idiots—'why waste your time on that lot?'. Above all we found ourselves made painfully aware of new worlds of human experience where Christian language and Christian values seemed foreign and meaningless.

All this and more the three of us had in common, yet there were profound and important differences. Consider the question of one's role. Running a youth group or a night shelter are jobs for which one is officially appointed, one steps at first into a ready made role, even if one has to adapt it because it may arouse wrong expectations in the eyes of others, and even if the way to fulfil the role is by no means clear to start with. Here I parted company from the other two people, for in Varanasi I had two roles. When Hindus asked who I was or what I was doing—as they invariably did at the beginning of every conversation, I would say that I was a student at the Sanskrit University. This reply invariably provoked interest, approval, and further questions. Yet I was also a Christian missionary, so at some suitable

moment in every conversation I added that I was a Christian priest, in charge of a certain church. This was a simple point to make for the church in question was a familiar land-mark in the city. Indeed that church looked neither more nor less strange in Varanasi than do mosques and temples in Bradford, Birmingham or Leicester where Christians are now becoming much more aware of other religions than they used to be.

This new awareness has been created by other factors besides the visible and obvious presence of Asians and their places of worship in some of our cities. T.V. programmes such as *The Long Search*, the study of 'other religions' at school, a growing body of good literature on other faiths—all these things make for a new atmosphere and new responsibilities. Suddenly we find ourselves confronted by other faiths in all their strangeness. We feel them as challenge and as invitation; as threat and as attraction; to explore them and to meet their adherents is both a Christian obligation and a perilous adventure. Where it will lead us we cannot yet foresee. What are the particular resources that we need for this ministry and where can we find them? As the first part of this article has already suggested, much of what we need is already available in the church's continuing experience of pastoral ministry and evangelistic outreach. Yet too often that experience is hidden away. We all need to share and articulate our experience of entering other's worlds much more than we do so that it can be made available for others within the body of Christ.

Yet ministry to people of other faiths is different and in the last part of this article I want to draw attention to five principles which have guided me in this area. These spring from reflections on my own experience, I did not work them out in advance, though I suppose I was always half-conscious of them. Most of them are in fact of universal application but they are of particular importance when one is meeting Asians.

First it is important to be present, to be seen around, to allow others to get to know one. Continuity is vital too. A departure that is too abrupt or final may provoke the unspoken response: 'This man has sucked us dry and now he has betrayed us'. We are used to the idea of a Vicar moving to another parish, of a government servant being transferred. My Hindu friends in Varanasi understood when I explained why I was leaving: 'Of course your children need to know their own country and their own culture'. Yet for the sake of the integrity of all

I had tried to do I make an annual return visit for about a month. My present job makes this possible. Not everyone is in such a happy position.

Second, it helps enormously to know the language: this of course is true of any group one is trying to reach, but more so for Asians than for many others. Indians and Pakistanis are commonly much more devoted to their language and its literature than their English counterparts. The foreigner who learns to speak even a little of their language is overwhelmed at the warmth of his reception. Much more than wearing their dress or adopting their customs, learning the language is the way into trust and acceptance.

Third comes reading and studying all one can about the other community—their history with its pride and its hurts, their customs, the sources of laughter and anger. Here the sociologists and anthropologists can be our allies and guides, but best of all are the novelists. There is nothing like a novel for helping one to enter the mind and heart of another community.

Fourth comes the stripping away of images. Every group sees others in terms of certain myths and images. For example the English commonly see India either as a land of desperate and appalling poverty or as the mystic east—the place of deep and ancient spirituality. Each image has in it more than a grain of truth: neither, whether separately or together is the whole truth. Indians see England as a land of unimaginable wealth and of total moral decadence. Again, while these images contain much truth, neither is all the truth there about us.

We can only approach another person through the images, but if we do not eventually discard them they become barriers instead of aids, for then we cannot meet the real person behind them. As Christians today we are becoming more acutely aware of how our false or partial images of other faiths have prevented us from seeing them as they are. Repentance is leading us to make new and strange discoveries. Here the word dialogue becomes relevant. It is perhaps best used as a symbol for this new mood—for both the word and the mood are difficult to define precisely.

But there is a danger here. Dialogue can too easily become a substitute for evangelism which in turn is seen through another false and distorting image. The Victorian missionary or his equivalent in this

country is seen as a Bible-punching fanatic who despised and ignored the religion and culture of those he was trying to convert. Here again the image is true but not the whole truth. The study of history is the best way to correct our distorted vision of the past. Such explorations of the missionary enterprise in India as I have been able to make have certainly afforded cause for shame, but also for humility at the dedication, sensitivity and wisdom of many of those who went to India in the name of Christ long before I was born, and who in most cases gave many more than my meagre thirteen years of service.

In other words just as an adolescent has to come to terms among other things with his own family and its history in order to reach maturity and live effectively in the world, so too we have to come to terms with our Christian past in order to relate effectively to people of other faiths.

So we have to strip away the images of the other community of faith and of our own communal past. Is not this strangely akin to the path of contemplative prayer charted for us in, for example, 'The Cloud of Unknowing'? Indeed it is surely no accident that those who find themselves summoned to enter the ministry of dialogue find very often that they are at the same time drawn into this way of prayer. There is a link between these two activities which needs much more exploring.

Fifth, the person who enters the realm of dialogue finds himself treading a path which can often be lonely and exposed. He needs the support of a small group who, while not necessarily involved themselves in the same ministry, can give a listening and sympathetic ear. A religious community can perhaps fulfil this role.

The support of such a group and the practice of contemplative prayer can provide the defence against two opposite dangers to which this kind of ministry exposes one. On the one hand is the risk of hardness. Constant exposure to Muslims for example can produce Christian ayatollahs who have become mirror images of those they are trying to reach. On the other hand there is the risk of 'going native' of being so attracted by the other community that one's own distinctive identity is lost, and one can no longer communicate with one's fellow-Christians.

The first step on either of these slippery paths usually begins with the conviction that one's own ministry is so unusual (and important)

that no-one else can possibly understand it. At this point, an evening spent with other Christians who are engaged in different kinds of outreach can afford one both humility and encouragement—the humility to see one's own work in its proper perspective, and the encouragement to continue it.

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## The Dialogue of Conflict

BY JOHN D. DAVIES



DIALOGUE: conflict. Impossible: this is like a Swiss battleship or a Canadian equator—something which just can't exist. Or could it be possible? History has a way of enabling 'impossible' things to happen, like North Sea Oil or a good Samaritan.

But first, let the impossibility declare itself. The liberal tradition will say that there's always a way through conflicts, that the faults must be on both sides, that there must be something good in the other's point of view, that we all believe in the same god really or that deep down we all want what is best for everyone. And then we find that we have thrown away our tools for attacking and destroying dangerous nonsense: we tolerate systems which stifle and degrade our sisters and brothers in the human race, all because we prefer dialogue to conflict, and we fail to recognise where conflict is necessary. So, for instance, in 1909, the British were so keen to maintain dialogue with the Afrikaners that they allowed the Transvaal system of government to be accepted as the standard for the Cape Province, rather than vice versa. The Transvaal system gave no voting rights to blacks, whereas in the Cape there were at least some rights for blacks in both franchise and land-tenure. A British decision led to the total disenfranchisement of blacks throughout South Africa. Continued conflict with a major group of whites within the Empire was too great a risk, and blacks paid the penalty.

In the middle of our College Eucharist yesterday, the person who was supposed to be offering intercessions (a Tanzanian), said that he had just seen a film about the South African incursions into Angola, backed up by British and American arms, and that he couldn't say any prayers; but he left a time for silent reflection. Next item in the liturgy, the Peace. What do you do with the Peace in such circumstances—when in the group there are black Zimbabweans and white South Africans, British, Germans? The 'Peace' can happen only on the far side of taking seriously the prophet's word about those who say Peace, Peace when there is no peace.

Even in the 'peaceful' west, we are fools if we ignore the way in which conflict is built into our system. Between class and class there can never really be more than a tactical alliance, not a real identity of interest. It scarcely rings true when we call a strike a breakdown of industrial peace: and this sharpens itself more and more clearly, when the system declares that more and more members of the less powerful classes are unnecessary, dispensable, surplus to the production needs of those who make the decisions.

Compared to this kind of conflict, the conflicts between the denominational traditions are almost trivial. For years, Christians insisted that these conflicts were so serious as to prevent one group from sharing in communion with another. In these days, a question is still to be faced in similar terms: can the poor share in communion with those who make them poor?

Is dialogue then a fraud, or a privilege to be reserved only for those who have managed to work through to the point where they deserve full intercommunion?

Jesus was in the thick of conflicts. In some of them, communication was in effect impossible. But in some others, Jesus enabled communication where communication had previously been impossible. For instance, there was a woman with a persistent haemorrhage, a permanent menstrual condition: and there was a leader of the social and religious establishment, whose responsibilities included keeping the community pure from people such as that woman. There was a continual conflict of interest between the woman and the religious authority. The presence of Jesus brought the two together in a precisely sharpened conflict of interest. The woman's claim on Jesus, for her lingering and chronic complaint, interrupted Jairus' claim in a very urgent and acute need. The conflict of interest was resolved, not by making the less

urgent and less privileged take second place, not by overruling anyone's claim: but Jesus attended to the need of the powerful only on the far side of the attention which he gave to the powerless. The daughter of the inheritor was allowed to die, and was raised to life by one who had been contaminated by contact with an outsider. The man who had the power to decide who was 'in' and who was 'out' had to wait: his daughter was healed, his family future was secured, only on the far side of a reduction of that power. But in the end, his daughter joined this excluded woman in a common fellowship of the healed. And this was the pattern which was followed out in the history of the apostolic Church. Some had thought that the Jew-Gentile conflict would be solved by Gentiles being allowed to become Christians alongside Jews: the contrary was the way it worked out: Jews could be Christians only by being willing to identify with a community which had become profoundly shaped by the Gentile mission.

Conflict of interest is all part of the style and background of the ministry of Jesus and his followers. The secret of the gospel is not the abolition of conflict but the converting of conflict into tension, the creative tension in which people remain deeply different but yet are enabled to be in communication. And communication leads to communion. But this communion must be worked out by both sides in a genuine partnership. It is no use if those who have the privilege decide, in their own good time, that they will allow others to enter what they have themselves devised. In the Diocese of Johannesburg there used to be a fellowship-meeting of clergy called the Clerical Society. Twenty-five years ago it was for white clergy only. As so often in South Africa, there was a black shadow-organisation called the African Clerical Society. Some of us refused to belong to the Clerical Society because it was segregated: so with much anxiety and heart-searching, the Clerical Society said to the black clergy, 'Come and join us'. The Africans said, 'No, we can't just come in as your guests, on your terms. If we are going to have a single clerical society, it must be one which we are part of from the start'. New wine needs new skins, new community needs new structure. Without this there will not be true dialogue, only a strained conversation in which both sides are always detecting overtones of the status-issue. This is, in my view, the only important argument against the ordination of women. Should women be admitted to what has previously been a male preserve, organised on assumptions which are so deeply derived from male

experience that they may be totally subconscious—e.g. the assumption that the normative administrative structure is military? Will this not inevitably mean that they will be forced into a false mould, that only those will get into it who are already disposed to accept it, and that therefore the church will miss the opportunity for a complete re-examination of its ministerial models? This would, again, not be dialogue. It would not overcome conflict. It would be yet another example of dominance by absorption and by silence.

We should note that the conflict is not merely between two equally balanced teams or forces. Life is not just a struggle between Liverpool and Everton, or between the Conservative and Labour parties, or between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. These conflicts, of course, are normal, and at the international level can absorb the wealth of the poor into the preoccupation of the rich. But the kind of conflict that runs through the Bible is also the kind of conflict which shapes so much of the modern world, the conflict between the establishment and the marginal, the normal and the misfit, the inheritors and the outsiders. This power, is almost by definition, unequally distributed. The powerful, even when they are technically opposed to each other, have one thing fundamentally in common, the assumption of the rights of those who have power. As Dan Berrigan remarked about the meeting of President Nixon with Chairman Mao, they greet each other with a mortician's wink. But where the conflict is between Jew and Gentile, management and labour, black and white, the conflict is between people who fundamentally do not recognise each other as of equal status. When Paul affirmed that in Christ there is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female, he is disowning the status-system on which he had been brought up; his daily thanksgiving had been to thank God that he was not Gentile, slave, or female. Such distinctions have their value precisely because they are so efficient as markers for telling us who is in and who is out, who is normal and who is not, who has status and who has not. Any dialogue which takes place has to be a lop-sided dialogue which affirms this differential. Those who are on the margins usually recognise what is happening to them: either the alleged dialogue is a device to assimilate a few of the inferior group as token representatives into the dominant group—examples range from Lloyd George to Muzowera—or else the whole thing is a kind of conversation-game which neither side really believes in—the toy telephone. The ideal of dialogue is ruined and debased by this sort of device.

Dialogue becomes possible when the suppressed group gains the power to engage the other group on something like equal terms. This change may completely alter the style of communication. One of the changes that has come to Zimbabwe has been a sudden new importance of spoken information, of news and rumour moving around independent of the main technological media. The media, almost by definition, operate from the centre towards the periphery: dialogue, genuine personal communication, can reverse the flow. If there is some predisposition which makes communication easier from the centre to the frontier than the other way round, true dialogue is impossible. And this means that dialogue is likely to be far less clear and predictable than the talk-traffic organised by the powerful.

The community of dialogue is found to be a bit confusing. A community which does not have at least a potential for conflict is not likely to generate much dialogue. There is all the difference between community and homogeneity. Some religious houses insist that their total residence-list should include as many non-members as members of the Order. In our training of missionaries at Selly Oak, we see it as a positive advantage for our training that our mission candidates are not more than half, and often much less than half, of a very mixed community. For, both dialogue and community are gifts of grace: they do not happen naturally; they are part of the new creation. Where conflict is possible, dialogue is possible. When the Church includes many conflicting elements, then it is most likely to be a genuine sign of hope to the world.

Jesus is the one who enables true dialogue. He meets and claims the inferior group on its own terms. He does not come out from Jerusalem, from the rabbi-box, to come down to the level of the poor people on the frontier. He starts from the frontier: he belongs there. He does not claim or reinforce the existing dominances: he reverses them. He calls to himself members of the producing class, provincial people with little influence or status in religion or society, and he promises to make them significant, influential. 'I will make you fishers of men'. And in spite of all their misunderstandings and lack of faith, this is what they become. They become people who first of all stand up for themselves over against the religious authorities (Acts 3 and 4) and then enable genuine dialogue between conflicting elements within the Christian community (Acts 15). If either the element of dialogue or the element of conflict had been missing, the Church

Catholic would not have developed and the Christian movement would have died away as one among thousands of religious clubs. Dialogue and conflict do seem to be contradictory. But there is a genius in the spirit of Christ which overcomes this contradiction and produces the new creation.

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## Dialogue and the Non-Believer

BY MERVYN ALEXANDER



ONE kind of encounter between the Christian and the non-believer is exemplified by Don Camillo and Peppone! The priest and the Communist mayor have a healthy respect for each other, on some issues they are allies, but there is no meeting of minds. They shout insults at each other, but there is no dialogue. Neither will listen to the other. They both love the people but ideologically they are directly opposed. There is some scriptural foundation and much traditional support for such attitudes but surely other approaches are possible and desirable.

What do we mean by dialogue in this context? It is not a confrontation, seeking to refute the arguments of the opposition and to establish one's own position. Dialogue implies the acceptance of the sincerity of others, however much their views may differ from our own. It is not simply a matter of each side putting forward its view and then listening to the other view. The attempt must be made to bridge the gap wherever this may be possible. In most discussions there will be confusion arising purely from differing terminology. If this can be cleared up there is already some progress. Each party to the dialogue must be willing to learn from the other. A non-believer can often throw light on some aspect of Christian faith. A Christian can perhaps help a non-believer to a fuller sense of human dignity and freedom. The attempt to explain the foundations of faith to the non-believer can be a

beneficial exercise. This may perhaps apply especially to a preacher, who is not accustomed to the sceptical audience with the right to reply! Another recurring comment in the history of this dialogue is the example of dedication to their cause shown by so many non-believers.

Dialogue is a matter of exploring common ground without compromise and without attempting to score debating points, although this temptation is very hard to resist. We have to try to be quite honest and open, not concealing elements unpalatable to us or to others. To be truly Christian we would have to love as well as respect those with whom we are in dialogue.

Beyond the dialogue that compares the views of believers and non-believers there is the consideration of ways of practical co-operation. This is important at every level of society in our pluralist world. It may also be the best method of building up the atmosphere of trust and respect so that formal dialogue becomes possible. There have been notable examples of co-operation to defend human values on the part of believers, and non-believers.

There are many informal discussions on a one-to-one basis in offices, factories, pubs and other places of learning! This is very important because these are often the decisive and formative conversations. Leonard Cheshire describes how the casual remark of a girl in a bar proved to be a turning point in his attitude to God. I fancy that if we could recall the important dialogues in our lives they would be chiefly of this person-to-person encounter.

However, when we speak of dialogue in this context we think of contacts with organised groups with common views. In fact, the majority of non-believers in this country would not belong to any classifiable group and can only be approached individually. The main characteristic of such people in the face of religious questions may simply be indifference and apathy. It is worth noticing that these are also the great problems encountered by the organisations promoting non-belief. The two chief groups are broadly described as the Marxists and the Humanists.

Marx rejected religious belief and Soviet Russia has actively promoted atheism. China duly followed the same path. However, Marxists in Western countries have on occasion been willing to collaborate with believers. A statement in March 1967 declares that British Communists 'welcome especially the developing dialogue between Christianity and

Marxism' and acknowledge that 'faith has also inspired men and women to courageous action and sacrifice for progressive causes'.

In 1947 Teilhard de Chardin wrote: 'Take at this very moment the two extremes around you, on the one side a Marxist, on the other a Christian, each convinced of the truth of his own particular doctrine, but both, we must suppose, inspired by an equal and radical faith in Man. Is it not certain—is it not indeed a fact of daily experience—that these two men, in so far as they believe, and in so far as they feel that the other believes strongly in the future of the world, experience for each other and as man to man a deep-seated sympathy—not just a sentimental sympathy but a sympathy based on evidence as yet dimly perceived, that they are travelling on the same road . . .'. *The Future of Man* (pp. 191—192).

Between 1965 and 1967 there were some meetings of German-speaking theologians and scientists with Marxists. The first meeting was held in Salzburg and was an attempt to engage in real dialogue to consider the possibility of ideological co-existence. Other themes were 'Christian Humanity and Marxist Humanism' and 'Creativity and Freedom'. There was certainly some growth in understanding.

This question of freedom in a Marxist society was a matter of practical concern in countries such as Jugoslavia and Poland. In Jugoslavia a different version of Marxism was accepted recognising self-management as the essential. There was also a willingness to admit the possibility of the existence of exploitation and other abuses within the system. This kind of admission opens the way to dialogue.

Polish Communists rediscovered a text from Marx: 'Communism is not for us a stable state which is to be established, an ideal to which reality will have to adjust itself. We call Communism the *real movement* which abolishes the present state of things'. This sense of continuing development which the Polish intellectuals stressed is also a hopeful sign.

At present we see the emergence of a kind of dialogue between the free trade union 'Solidarity' and the Polish Government. Remarkable concessions have been won from the Government by the strength of the working classes. It is a remarkable example of Marxist theory in reverse. In the background there is the threat of Russian intervention. An element in the unity of the workers is their religious faith and the moral support of Pope John Paul, their fellow countryman. The hopeful aspect of the situation is that there does seem to be genuine dialogue.

At times the leaders of 'Solidarity' work for a policy of restraint among their members. Equally the Government has so far not attempted to restore the *status quo* by force.

In France in the sixties there was the remarkable figure of Roger Garaudy, a French Communist who was prepared to take part in dialogue and eventually was expelled from the Party in 1970. Some of his ideas could be promising lines of development. He declared that dialogue with Christians did not involve compromise. It was rather a kind of mutual growth by which faith could become purer and Marxism richer and more critical. It would lead not only to a better understanding of the other side but to a better understanding of one's own position when the straw men and caricatures of controversy were set aside. It is one thing to expound Christian faith to an already committed audience and quite another to explain it in the presence of critical opponents. This can be a valuable exercise in perceiving the essentials. But could one go further and suggest that Christianity and Marxism could positively learn from each other and what in the concrete was to be learnt?

Garaudy suggested that Marxists could learn from Christianity about man's deepest aspirations. That man should conceive of a Christ whose love is infinite is a beautiful idea and this act of faith proves that man never considers himself wholly defeated. Marxism would be the poorer if S. Paul and S. Augustine, S. Teresa of Avila, Pascal and Claudel, and the Christian meaning of the transcendence of love were to become foreign to it. At this stage Garaudy thought that Christianity provided a symbolic language to express deep human aspirations. The greatness of religion was that it asked permanently valid questions, its weakness was that it rushes in to answer them too soon and too dogmatically. What Christians were to learn from Marxism was also stated: they could learn from the inadequacy of discussion about ends and purposes which did not discuss the means of their realisation. It had to be conceded that much uplifting Christian talk about the dignity of man and the love of one's neighbour unfortunately omitted to say how these noble ideas were to be put into practice. There could be flagrant contradictions between principles and life. Marxism could teach Christians to commit themselves politically in order to realise the ideals of the Gospel.

On the Christian side theologians like Karl Rahner were ready to see an 'implicit Christianity' in many Marxist values and ideals.

Hence we hear such phrases as 'nameless Christianity' and 'anonymous Christians'. However, no Marxist (or Humanist for that matter) will relish being told that he is really a Christian without knowing it!

In Latin America the theologies of liberation have made wide use of Marxist analysis and theory. In the face of injustice and oppression, the dialogue between Marxists and Christians has often been concerned with political collaboration. It is a position that is not easy to understand at a distance, since it is essentially a dialogue based on the needs of the actual situation as seen by those involved.

What about Humanists? Although they may belong to a particular organisation, they are likely to be highly individualistic. Some actively campaign against religion, some claim to fight irrationality and superstition, some aim to promote rational thinking, particularly through secular education, some concentrate on a positive approach to the happiness of mankind, free from guilt and fear. Humanists have actively supported campaigns in favour of euthanasia, abortion, easier divorce.

There have been some effects at dialogue in small groups, but the best opportunities are likely to arise in ordinary contacts and under other auspices. Christians and Humanists work together on many different bodies in a relationship of mutual respect. It could be constructive for them to discuss their fundamental beliefs. There are many situations where they can make common cause in their concern for the good of the community.

The Social Morality Council brought together Christian, Jewish and Humanist representatives in dialogue and co-operation. A report was produced on moral and religious education in county schools and various other controversial issues were discussed. Such efforts are important if we are to come to terms with a pluralist society.

In conclusion, we are left with the question of the silent majority of those who do not enter into dialogue in any sense on the great questions of life. The Christian should be equipped and willing to enter into dialogue with any kind of non-believer, remembering always that dialogue also implies a readiness to listen and to learn, as well as having 'your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have. But give it with courtesy and respect . . .' (I Peter 3, 15).

*Mervyn Alexander is the Roman Catholic Bishop of Clifton, Bristol, and is a member of the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Believers.*

# Companion Developments

*Letter from the Warden*

The Friary, Vicarage Road  
LLANDUDNO LL30 1PT

Dear Companions and interested friends,

Since I last wrote to you in this magazine a year or two ago the Company has developed considerably both in its sense of purpose and in its practical organization. The Warden's part in this has consisted of personal visits to groups throughout the Province and contact with Leader-Secretaries and individual Companions. Sometimes it would have been useful to have a means of saying something to *all* Companions, but these were mostly just dull things about the emerging system and not of sufficient general interest to merit asking for space here. We have reached a stage, however, where there are a number of exciting things to report.

Four things characterize the renewal.

(a) A rekindling of what seems to have been the Company's original vision. 'Recognizing that, contrary to the popular and uninformed image, the friars and sisters live under pressure from a needy and demanding world, we seek specifically to be the one group that makes no demands. We want to support quietly and prayerfully behind the scenes, to be attentive, and ready to help in whatever way the opportunities come'.

(b) A re-discovery of one another. There is something less than human about a group that, however available to others, neglects its own members.

(c) The emergence of leadership from its own ranks. Releasing pressures on people is a real ministry. The Company is making less demand on S.S.F. to provide its sense of direction and inner 'spirit'. It steadily acquires a definable identity and an inner life of its own. The presence of a friar or sister at a meeting (something we enjoy when it doesn't add too much to the existing pressures) is regarded as '*good occasionally*' rather than the norm.

(d) The specific (and unpredictable) '*work*' being given to those groups of Companions who are simply making themselves available to the Spirit. This is not unconnected with the preceding signs of renewal. Indeed it is the exciting outcome of them. The Lord doesn't long leave in the dark a group of christians who can say to him simply—without laying down conditions or being inhibited by preconceived ideas—'*You have called us together, Lord. Now what do you want us to do?*'

We gave up describing the Companion Areas by the names of counties or dioceses a year or two ago. The U.K. is divided, for our purposes, into areas defined by postcodes, either singly or grouped. In only one instance is a postcode area actually divided. This is NE (Newcastle-on-Tyne), a very large area which we have divided into five. Excluding Scotland, which has its own geographical problems, there are seventy-four Areas. Fifty-nine of these now have Leader-Secretaries.

On counting up these figures I was very pleasantly surprised. Progress had seemed slow and has involved my writing, and receiving many hundreds of letters in the last four years. In this period I have often bewailed the lack of enthusiasm, leadership, imagination, and commitment to the movement. Rebuked by these figures I must cease to do that!

This growth has involved the Warden not only in considerable correspondence but also in hitch-hiking hundreds of miles to visit and encourage the Company in the different areas of Britain. The need for a regular magazine or newsletter has been increasingly felt. This would make details of development throughout the Province available to *all* Companions. I am delighted with the initiative of those who have taken this matter in hand and simply organized the first three (experimental) issues of such a magazine. I'm pleased, too, with the enthusiasm of those who have hastened to support it. (It will be available to any interested people who will send £1.25 to: S.S.F. Companion, Box 35, Winchester SO22 6AB). The order form, which I hope reached all Companions, said it aimed to provide '*a vehicle for our Warden's communications*'. This does *not* mean, as some have wickedly put it about, '*to buy Brother Raphael a car*'!

To end on a more serious note. This venture is specifically for the development of the Companion movement and therefore of limited interest. It will not in any way rival the magazine you are now reading. Companions will still need THE FRANCISCAN to gain news from the houses and S.S.F. news of wider interest, to 'inform' their prayers and keep them in close contact with the Society. Our newsletter will be about details of development and organization which would bore most readers of this magazine and have no fair claim to take up space in it.

The above, however, has, I hope, been of interest to many of our friends beyond the Company. Those whose interest in the movement goes deeper must follow us into the pages of *The Companion*.

We are being set free from old images, from limited and preconceived ideas about ourselves. That is a sure sign that the Spirit of life and adventure is at work.

Sincerely, RAPHAEL S.S.F.

# Books

## Initiation

*New Life.* By Anne Field O.S.B. Mowbrays, £1.95.

The book's sub-title, 'What it meant to become a Christian in the early church' neatly sums up its content. The author is a member of Stanbrook Abbey in Worcestershire and she gives us here an instruction course for those to be baptised as it may have been in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D.

Her technique is to use the extant sermons of people like S. Ambrose, S. Augustine and S. John Chrysostom and by a process of collation and synthesis produce a single course of lectures. These lectures are easy to read and open up in a popular way the teachings of

these great church fathers on the creed, the Lord's Prayer, on salvation, the sacraments, and the spiritual meaning of the Scripture. We are also given an account of the dramatic rites of exorcism and baptism.

What impressed me most was the corporate character of Christian initiation and the vivid, even highly charged, use of the symbolic actions in the rites. There is a great sense of being equipped for spiritual combat on the side of a converted, regenerated body, the Church. Deserves a wide readership.

VICTOR S.S.F.

## A Man Such As I

*The Son of Man.* By Maurice Casey.

S.P.C.K., 1979, xiii + 272 pp., £12.50.

This familiar title, which Jesus so often uses with reference to himself in all four gospels, may not strike the ordinary reader as peculiar or difficult. But it can be said without exaggeration that it has presented the most intractable problem to biblical scholarship for more than a hundred years. The title obviously has some relationship with the 'one like a son of man' of Dan. 7:13. Was it, then, a Messianic title in Judaism in New Testament times? If so, it is certainly very strange, as it scarcely denotes royalty. Is it, then, to be connected with contemporary speculations concerning the 'primal man', for instance in Zoroastrian religion? Does it relate to speculations concerning Adam? How did Jesus see his own position when he used this title? Was he actually referring to himself every time he used it? Did he perhaps expect someone other than himself when he referred to the future coming of the Son

of Man? This idea, actually held by a number of scholars in the present century, is largely abandoned today. But we still have to ask what Jesus intended to mean if he always referred to himself when he used the phrase. Is it always a Messianic title on his lips? What about the cases (e.g. Luke 9:58) where it seems to express humanness, even humiliation? Can it have a corporate sense, expressing his involvement with all humanity as their representative? And why is it confined to the words of Jesus? Why does it not appear in the rest of the New Testament, with the one exception of Acts 7:56? Book after book has been written in the attempt to answer these questions. None of them has been entirely satisfactory or convincing.

It is not too much to say that Maurice Casey's new book has at last solved the problem. It is therefore a very important book, and should be read by all those

who have a sufficient training in theology to be able to handle it. This is not a case of a new theory, as speculative as all its predecessors, but just a little more ingenious. It is on the contrary a very careful re-working of all the evidence from ancient sources, rigidly excluding speculative reconstructions to fill in the gaps. It is also the culmination of trends in recent scholarship which have been moving inevitably towards the conclusions which Casey has reached. He has succeeded in putting together the proper consequences of the revolutionary observations of recent studies. The result is a firm, strongly based explanation of the Son of Man phrase which will not be easily overthrown.

Much of the book is devoted to 'the interpretation and influence of Daniel 7' (sub-title of the book), involving a massive survey of Jewish and Christian writings from the second century B.C. to the middle ages. The observation (already made by Levestad and Vermes) that there never was a Son of Man title in Judaism is confirmed. The phrase simply means 'the man', a human being. In Dan. 7 : 13 it refers to a person in a vision, who does indeed represent symbolically the loyal Jews who took part in the Maccabean revolt. Casey shows that this was always recognised in Jewish, and even in Christian, commentaries, especially in the East. But the main interpretation of New Testament times updated the passage to apply it to the contemporary struggle with the Romans, and identified

the Son of Man figure with the Messiah. But of course the phrase used, i.e. 'a man' (literally 'a son of man'), is an expression which does not normally have any such connections. When Jesus spoke of himself as 'the man', he simply meant 'a man such as I' (as J. Jeremias pointed out). The phrase by itself is not enough to establish connection with Dan. 7 : 13 or ensure that he means to speak of himself as the Messiah. This can be asserted only when there is actual quotation of Dan. 7 : 13 elsewhere in the context.

The fact remains, however, that the Son of Man looks like a title in the Greek, even though it cannot have been so in the underlying Aramaic form of the sayings. Casey has his own way of showing how this came about. His explanation makes it very difficult to accept that any of the sayings where there is definite allusion to Dan. 7 : 13 can be authentic. We are thus left with the conclusion that Jesus neither identified himself with the Messiah, nor put himself forward as inclusive representative of humanity, by means of this phrase. This is not to say that he did not make such claims in other ways. But now, as a result of this fine book, we have the right basis to try to see what Jesus really did mean when he referred to himself as 'a man such as I', and the starting-point for reconstructing the effect of his words upon the beginnings of Christian doctrine in the New Testament.

BARNABAS S.S.F.

## What Manner of Man is This?

**The Jesus Question.** By John Ziesler.

The last few years have seen a spate of books about Jesus, some of them deliberately provocative, and many of them disturbing. The central question is whether the church can rightly retain

Lutterworth Press, 1980, 149 pp., £4.95.

its traditional faith that Jesus is the Son of God. But there are complex issues involved in any attempt to answer this question. Not surprisingly many people are confused by the debate. John

Ziesler's book is specially aimed to sort out the confusion and to help people to see what the debate is all about. He avoids technical language as far as possible. He is notably patient in presenting difficult and complex arguments, taking one step at a time, and seizing on essentials. Short bibliographies are provided at the end of each section.

The first question to be asked is whether a man called Jesus of Nazareth actually lived. The answer is yes, but this is shown to be not a foolish question. Next Ziesler asks about the history of this man. The obstacles to any attempt to reconstruct the historical facts about Jesus are faced. At the same time it becomes clear why it is so hard to accept the claim that Jesus knew himself to be, or called himself, the Son of God as a matter of history. Ziesler also shows why it is not possible to evade the issue by pretending that it is not relevant to faith. In the next major section he takes up the question whether the faith of the New Testament writers reflects a fundamental change in the understanding of Jesus and his message on the part of the primitive church. There is a tension in the New Testament, precisely because the faith in Jesus as Lord, exalted to the right hand of God, and recognised to be the agent of his predetermined plan for the salvation of all mankind (hence regarded as pre-existent), was

not allowed to entail either denial of Jesus' humanity or breach of Jewish monotheism. Finally Ziesler traces the urgent need to resolve this tension which was felt in the second century, and led to the classic formulations of the Nicene Creed and the Chalcedonian Definition, and which is also felt today, and explains the reason for the contemporary debate. There are modern attempts to re-state Nicaea and Chalcedon, represented by the traditionalist positions of Eric Mascall and Sir Norman Anderson. More often, however, scholars attempt more radical constructions, in order to do afresh for our own time what Nicaea and Chalcedon did for theirs. These include such diverse thinkers as D. M. Baillie, J. Knox, N. Pittenger, J. A. T. Robinson, M. Wiles, P. Schoonenberg, and Geoffrey Lampe. Their views are so varied that it is not surprising that many are bewildered by the Jesus question today. But they have one fundamental point in common, the insistence that God works through the natural order, so that it is essential that the humanity of Jesus should not be devalued, as so often happens on the traditional view. In the end Ziesler leaves the question open for the reader to think through further for himself. He will certainly be in a better position to do so after reading this excellent guide.

BARNABAS S.S.F.

## The Word of God and Liberation

**Black Theology, Black Power.** By Allan Aubrey Boesak.  
Mowbrays, 1978, xii + 185 pp., £2.95.

Doctor Boesak, a black South African theologian, has produced a book that is well worth reading. His work is a reflection in the light of the Word of God on the black struggle for freedom from racist oppression. There is, of course, nothing new in that as Doctor

Boesak's presentation and criticisms of other black theologians makes clear. What makes his approach so refreshing and attractive is that he explicitly situates his work within the global movement of the theology of liberation. This means that although he can affirm,

for instance, the cry of Black Theology that 'Jesus is Black', he does not absolutize this, either in the way that James Cone does (for Cone, it often appears, the only oppressed people in the world are the American blacks) nor does he absolutize it by reverting to the naive fundamentalism of Cleage for whom Jesus literally was black and came only for the sake of blacks, which leads Cleage to construct a sort of perpetual-ghetto theology which actually serves the interests of the oppressors. To make one's own situation, Doctor Boesak argues, the ultimate criterion for all theology is to open oneself to an ideological take-over in which, here, Black Theology and Black Power become completely identified, leaving no room for the judgement of the Word of God. For Doctor Boesak, '... Black Theology is a theology of liberation in the situation of blackness. For blacks, it is the only legitimate way of theologizing—but *only within the framework of the theology of liberation*. Black theology, therefore, finds itself in intention and theological methodology, and certainly its passion for liberation, not only alongside African theology, but also alongside the expressions of liberation theology in Latin America and Asia' (144, his emphasis).

To claim to belong to the 'school' of liberation theology means that one's work is *de facto* open to the criticisms

made of the 'school' and especially the argument (most cogently presented by Fierro) that much of liberation theology is merely a pious politicization of traditional theology, with no real reformulation or development of doctrine. In some ways Doctor Boesak is in danger of doing this and I also feel that he is too dependent upon the white theology (in his case, it seems, Paul Tillich's) that he rejects as an instrument in the perpetuation of racism. However, Doctor Boesak shows himself to be at least indirectly aware of these kinds of problems when he asks: 'How do black theologians define liberation?' (150). Again he shows himself to be majestically open and global, for he recognizes that 'racism is but one incidental dimension of oppression against which the total struggle must be waged' (151). Doctor Boesak is well aware that there is a relationship between racism and capitalism. It is my hope that he will pursue this insight because it is only in the acceptance of the need to be liberated from capitalism and the ways of thinking produced by it that theology itself will be set free to make its own contribution to the struggle for freedom from all tyranny.

My hope in recommending Doctor Boesak's book is that we will hear more from him.

JONATHAN HUMPHREYS O.F.M.

## Pure Grace

**Holiness.** By Donald Nicholl. Darton, Longman and Todd, 1981, £3.99.

This book originates partly in addresses to Poor Clares in California which is no doubt why it has been sent to us. As the author says, 'If we are embarrassed when our friends discover that we are reading, say, about how to be better tennis players', how much more if it is a 'book about how to be

holy'. Since life in this sort of community offers very special opportunities for discovering one's own *unholiness*, the embarrassment is all the greater. Yet the former Bishop of Exeter said that holiness was what was expected of such communities, so the problem is inescapable. The answer, as so often

in Christianity, seems to lie in a paradox: we have no righteousness of our own, and it is the deepening certainty of this that turns us more and more to the only source of true righteousness in Christ. Here lies the only holiness to be had. Self-knowledge and self-forgetfulness are both necessary ingredients. It is a long road to this 'condition of complete simplicity / (Costing not less than everything)' for most of us, and Dr. Nicholl describes various aspects and stages of the journey with some attractive stories,

but he finishes by a reminder that the 'first to recognise the kingdom of heaven on Jesus' own terms' was the thief crucified with him: if our knowledge of holiness is real, and he insists that the form of knowledge appropriate to this subject must make it incarnate in our lives, we shall know in the end that we have met pure grace. Embarrassment would be a poor reason for not profiting from this book.

A SISTER C.S.CI.

## Transfiguration

**Marked for Life : Prayer in the Easter Christ.** By Dame Maria Boulding.  
S.P.C.K., £1.95.

**The Reasons of the Heart.** By John S. Dunne. S.C.M. Press, £4.95.

Both these books deal in their very different ways with the central Christian theme: one goes into the desert, into the eye of the storm, into death itself—and one finds transfiguration, the blossoming of the desert, the still centre, resurrection.

Dame Maria's book could be an answer to the young man, often cited, who wanted to know how to 'pray his life'. We are already indebted to the English Benedictine Congregation for Cardinal Hume and for the Congregation's book, *Consider Your Call*, to which Dame Maria contributed. At least one reader desired her better acquaintance and is grateful for this book. Here is the sanity and breadth of this tradition at its best, and there are constant succinct felicities of expression to which to return. The working out of the theme is shown in many and various ways and there is the repeated transfiguring touch of joy as the purpose of it all appears.

John Dunne writes in a very different style and tone. He deals with the theme of loneliness, inescapable for many

today, and here too we find that the acceptance of it leads through the eye of the needle, and it is transformed into communion with all men. Eliot wrote in *The Cocktail Party* that

'Each way means loneliness—and communion'

and Charles Williams wrote of

'the return of the personalities beyond the bond and blessing of departure of personality'.

Here is yet another, more lengthy exploration of the theme. This writing is more tortuous in style than Dame Maria's, and the accent is on a different side of life, yet both have in view as their aim a wholeness of life for which in our different ways we all long.

Perhaps something of the difference of flavour of the two can be conveyed by comparison of John Dunne's 'he should become accessible to others only when he releases them from fulfilling his longing for communion' and Dame Maria's 'Only through prayer can we grow free enough not to cling, and in prayer we pledge ourselves and all the human commonwealth to this joy, and let it

abound'. John Dunne sees the fulfilment of self 'when I find the heart and soul to love, when I find my way through death', and Dame Maria writes more explicitly of Christian doctrine and of the resurrection 'not simply of your body but of everything in creation that you have experienced, enjoyed, loved and honoured through your body'. Differ-

ences of approach, but the same mystery.

To each of these books I hope to return, confident that I shall find further stimulation. If I had money to spend I should think it well spent on either or both: since I have not, I am very grateful for the review copies.

A SISTER C.S.C.I.

## Monk, Bishop & Apostle

**Martin of Tours, Parish Priest, Mystic and Exorcist.** By Christopher Donaldson.  
Routledge & Kegan Paul, £8.95.

It was not till I came to Cornwall that I began to realise the key position Martin had on the course of Christianity in Britain. From Martin by Loo to his Isle in the Scillies he pervades the south of the County. Chapter 15 of this book does not mention Cornwall but shows that from Canterbury, where the author was Vicar of the ancient parish, right through Britain, the influence was crucial just as the Christianity of the Roman administration gave way to the Celtic monks.

Sulpitius Severus, in his life of Martin is blatantly partisan, backing his hero against the famed ascetics of Egypt and Syria. Christopher Donaldson is more subtly partisan, but none the less determined to infect us with his own enthusiasm. It will do us no harm to let ourselves be carried away a bit, as the balance in his favour needs to be tilted considerably against our previous neglect.

Born of pagan parents in Pannonia, about 316 A.D., Martin was early drawn to the Church, but his military father forced him into the army at the age of fifteen, where he endured the full service of twenty-five years. The crucial experience of the divided cloak, and the vision of Christ wearing it, came when he was twenty. The author suggests that he had experience as an

exorcist in his early service in the Church, and so had to do with the mentally afflicted of the congregation. He also suggests that his final service in the army was as a *medicus*. His later healings therefore had a good background of practice. At the age of forty he leaves the army.

His first move was homewards to see and try to convert his parents. He then had two years of trial in Italy, and at last reached his destined sphere in Gaul to found the first community at Ligugé, not far from Poitiers, to which Bishop Hilary was soon returning from exile. It was to Hilary and his household he had first escaped after leaving the army. There the new direction of his life was set.

Ligugé and Marmoutier, where he formed his second family in 371, when reluctantly elected Bishop of Tours, still cherish that monastic tradition which he founded, and which did so much in Celtic countries to carry the Church from cities to sparse rural areas. He combined the monk with the miracle-working bishop and the journeying apostle in an extraordinary combination. Many were drawn to him, and then sent from him. This lively account will draw us also with fresh appreciation.

✠ WILLIAM LASH.

## Sister of the Poor

**Jeanne Jugan: Humble So As To Love More.** By Paul Milcent.

Darton, Longman and Todd, £3·50.

'God wants me for himself. He is keeping me for a work as yet unknown, for a work which is not yet founded'—the words of a sixteen year old girl to her mother after refusing a proposal of marriage. Neither of them could have foreseen just what that early sense of God's call would lead to, for the young girl is Jeanne Jugan, later known as Sister Mary of the Cross, and foundress of the Little Sisters of the Poor.

Paul Milcent's book is a clear and thoroughly researched account of the development of Jeanne Jugan's sense of vocation and her determination to 'throw her lot in with the poor'. Despite her lifestyle of uncompromising poverty it was not long before others were wanting to join her. By 1879, the year of her death, the Little Sisters of the Poor numbered about 2,400, and

their Constitution was finally approved by the Pope.

Paul Milcent illustrates this remarkable, and at times tragic, story with some delightful tales about Jeanne Jugan and her activities as a beggar, and sets it vividly against the background of a conflict-torn and poverty stricken France. If at times I found the central character a little remote, Milcent's social and historical comment continued to provide a sense of reality and a source of interest.

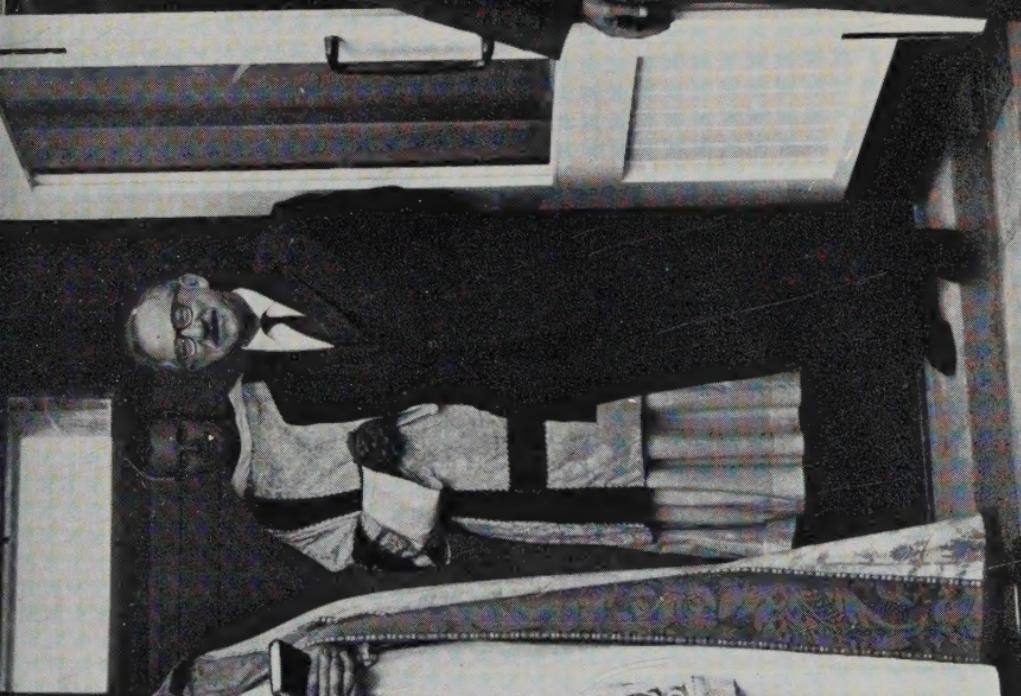
The book is easy to read and I appreciated the very short chapters. For anyone who is interested in the detail of the history of the Little Sisters of the Poor, Milcent lists all his major sources at the end of each chapter with notes on them at the back of the book.

HANNAH C.S.F.,  
Novice.

## Books Received

The Reviews Editor gratefully acknowledges the receipt of the following publications:

**What happens when you Pray**, by Hubert Richards, S.C.M. Press; **Word into Silence**, by John Main, D.L.T.; **The Human Potential**, by Peter Hinchliff & David Young, D.L.T.; **The Theology of Vatican II**, by Christopher Butler, D.L.T.; **Red Tape and The Gospel**, by Eleanor M. Jackson, Phlogiston; **The Communion of Saints**, by Michael Perham, Alcuin/S.P.C.K.; **A Communion of Communions: One Eucharistic Fellowship**, Edited by J. Robert Wright, Seabury Press; **The Whole Family of God**, by John Austin Baker, Mowbrays; **Letters and Papers from Prison**, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, S.C.M. Press; **The Unknown Christ of Hinduism**, by Raimundo Panikkar, D.L.T.; **Sources of Renewal**, by Karol Wojtyla, Collins & Fontana.



*Brother Owen at the opening of the new building  
at Saint Francis School, Hooke.*